



Lord, thank you for a fresh, new year—for me and all elected officials! It's exciting! Give me a heart eager to pray for this nation and all who lead it, beginning today. Amen.

JANUARY

1

GENESIS 1:1–2:25

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ²The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

³Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

⁶Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” ⁷And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. ⁸God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

⁹Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. ¹²The land produced vegetation— all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹³And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years.

¹⁵Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. ¹⁶God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

²³And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make human beings* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,* and the

small animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image.

In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

²⁹Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

^{2:1}So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ²On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested* from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath

of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs* and closed up the opening. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

²³"At last!" the man exclaimed.

"This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called 'woman,'
because she was taken from
'man.'"

²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

²⁵Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

1:1 Or In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . . 1:26a Or man; Hebrew reads adam. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads all the earth. 1:27 Or the man; Hebrew reads ha-adam. 2:2 Or ceased; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or mist. 2:19 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter. 2:21 Or took a part of the man's side.

MATTHEW 1:1–2:12

This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham*:

- ² Abraham was the father of Isaac.
Isaac was the father of Jacob.
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.
- ³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar).
Perez was the father of Hezron.
Hezron was the father of Ram.*
- ⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.
- ⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).
Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).
Obed was the father of Jesse.
- ⁶ Jesse was the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).
- ⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.
Abijah was the father of Asa.*
- ⁸ Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.*
Jehoram was the father* of Uzziah.

⁹ Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
 Jotham was the father of Ahaz.
 Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

¹⁰ Hezekiah was the father of
 Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of
 Amon.*

Amon was the father of Josiah.

¹¹ Josiah was the father of
 Jehoiachin* and his brothers
 (born at the time of the exile
 to Babylon).

¹² After the Babylonian exile:
 Jehoiachin was the father of
 Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the father of
 Zerubbabel.

¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of
 Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.
 Eliakim was the father of Azor.

¹⁴ Azor was the father of Zadok.
 Zadok was the father of Akim.
 Akim was the father of Eliud.

¹⁵ Eliud was the father of Eleazar.
 Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
 Matthan was the father of Jacob.

¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph, the
 husband of Mary.
 Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is
 called the Messiah.

¹⁷ All those listed above include four-
 teen generations from Abraham to
 David, fourteen from David to the
 Babylonian exile, and fourteen from
 the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.

¹⁸ This is how Jesus the Messiah was
 born. His mother, Mary, was engaged
 to be married to Joseph. But before the
 marriage took place, while she was
 still a virgin, she became pregnant
 through the power of the Holy Spirit.
¹⁹ Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man
 and did not want to disgrace her pub-
 licly, so he decided to break the en-
 gagement* quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of
 the Lord appeared to him in a dream.
 “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said,
 “do not be afraid to take Mary as your
 wife. For the child within her was con-
 ceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she
 will have a son, and you are to name

him Jesus,* for he will save his people
 from their sins.”

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the
 Lord’s message through his prophet:

²³ “Look! The virgin will conceive a
 child!

She will give birth to a son,
 and they will call him Immanuel,*
 which means ‘God is with us.’”

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as
 the angel of the Lord commanded and
 took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not
 have sexual relations with her until
 her son was born. And Joseph named
 him Jesus.

²¹ Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Ju-
 dea, during the reign of King Herod.
 About that time some wise men* from
 eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem,
 asking, ²⁴ “Where is the newborn king
 of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose,*
 and we have come to worship him.”

³ King Herod was deeply disturbed
 when he heard this, as was everyone
 in Jerusalem. ⁴ He called a meeting of
 the leading priests and teachers of re-
 ligious law and asked, “Where is the
 Messiah supposed to be born?”

⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said,
 “for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land
 of Judah,
 are not least among the ruling
 cities* of Judah,
 for a ruler will come from you
 who will be the shepherd for my
 people Israel.’”

⁷ Then Herod called for a private
 meeting with the wise men, and he
 learned from them the time when
 the star first appeared. ⁸ Then he told
 them, “Go to Bethlehem and search
 carefully for the child. And when you
 find him, come back and tell me so
 that I can go and worship him, too!”

⁹ After this interview the wise men
 went their way. And the star they
 had seen in the east guided them to
 Bethlehem. It went ahead of them
 and stopped over the place where the
 child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star,

they were filled with joy! ¹¹They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

1:1 Greek *Jesus the Messiah, Son of David and son of Abraham*. **1:3** Greek *Aram*, a variant spelling of Ram; also in 1:4. See 1 Chr 2:9-10. **1:7** Greek *Asaph*, a variant spelling of Asa; also in 1:8. See 1 Chr 3:10. **1:8a** Greek *Joram*, a variant spelling of Jehoram; also in 1:8b. See 1 Kgs 22:50 and note at 1 Chr 3:11. **1:8b** Or *ancestor*; also in 1:11. **1:10** Greek *Amos*, a variant spelling of Amon; also in 1:10b. See 1 Chr 3:14. **1:11** Greek *Jeconiah*, a variant spelling of Jehoiachin; also in 1:12. See 2 Kgs 24:6 and note at 1 Chr 3:16. **1:19** Greek *to divorce her*. **1:21** *Jesus* means "The LORD saves." **1:23** Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10 (Greek version). **2:1** Or *royal astrologers*; Greek reads *magi*; also in 2:7, 16. **2:2** Or *star in the east*. **2:6a** Greek *the rulers*. **2:6b** Mic 5:2; 2 Sam 5:2.

PSALM 1:1-6

- ¹ Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.
- ² But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.
- ³ They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

- ⁴ But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.
- ⁵ They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly.
- ⁶ For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

PROVERBS 1:1-6

These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel.

- ² Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise.
- ³ Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair.
- ⁴ These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young.
- ⁵ Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance
- ⁶ by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the words of the wise and their riddles.

Lord, your call for leaders to wisely obey you is a message for elected leaders too. Cut through the clutter and make yourself known to them today. Interrupt their lives, and give them ears to hear you. Amen.



GENESIS 3:1-4:26

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

²"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. ³"It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

⁴“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

¹¹“Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

¹²The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike* your head, and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶Then he said to the woman,

“I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.*”

¹⁷And to the man he said,

“Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

²⁰Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.* ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

²²Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

^{4:1}Now Adam* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have produced* a man!” ²Later she

gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, ⁵but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

⁶“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

⁸One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.”* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

¹⁰But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s blood. ¹²No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment* is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!”

¹⁵The LORD replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. ¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. ²²Lamech’s other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. ²³One day Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
listen to me, you wives of
Lamech.

I have killed a man who
attacked me,
a young man who wounded me.

²⁴ If someone who kills Cain is
punished seven times,
then the one who kills me will
be punished seventy-seven
times!”

²⁵Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.” ²⁶When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

3:8 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.
3:15 Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b. **3:16** Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you*. **3:20** *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.” **3:22** Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. **4:1a** Or *the man*; also in 4:25. **4:1b** Or *I have acquired*. *Cain* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “produce” or “acquire.” **4:8** As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks “*Let’s go out into the fields.*” **4:13** Or *My sin*. **4:16** *Nod* means “wandering.” **4:18** Or *the ancestor of*, and so throughout the verse. **4:25** *Seth* probably means “granted”; the name may also mean “appointed.”

MATTHEW 2:13–3:6

After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

¹⁴That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, ¹⁵and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”*

¹⁶Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance. ¹⁷Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ “A cry was heard in Ramah—
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead.”*

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. ²⁰“Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. ²²But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. ²³So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

^{3:1}In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, ²“Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”* ³The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming!
Clear the road for him!’”*

⁴John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁵People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. ⁶And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

2:15 Hos 11:1. 2:18 Jer 31:15. 3:2 Or has come, or is coming soon. 3:3 Isa 40:3 (Greek version).

PSALM 2:1-12

- ¹ Why are the nations so angry?
Why do they waste their time
with futile plans?
- ² The kings of the earth prepare for battle;
the rulers plot together
against the LORD
and against his anointed one.
- ³ “Let us break their chains,” they cry,
“and free ourselves from slavery
to God.”
- ⁴ But the one who rules in heaven
laughs.
The Lord scoffs at them.
- ⁵ Then in anger he rebukes them,
terrifying them with his fierce
fury.
- ⁶ For the Lord declares, “I have
placed my chosen king on the
throne
in Jerusalem,* on my holy
mountain.”
- ⁷ The king proclaims the LORD’s
decree:
“The LORD said to me, ‘You are
my son.*
Today I have become your
Father.*”
- ⁸ Only ask, and I will give you the
nations as your inheritance,
the whole earth as your
possession.
- ⁹ You will break* them with an
iron rod
and smash them like clay pots.”*

- ¹⁰ Now then, you kings, act wisely!
Be warned, you rulers of the earth!
- ¹¹ Serve the LORD with reverent fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
- ¹² Submit to God's royal son,* or he
will become angry,
and you will be destroyed in the
midst of all your activities—
for his anger flares up in an instant.
But what joy for all who take
refuge in him!

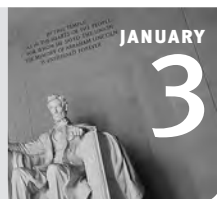
2:6 Hebrew on Zion. 2:7a Or Son; also in 2:12.
2:7b Or Today I reveal you as my son. 2:9 Greek
version reads rule. Compare Rev 2:27. 2:12 The
meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PROVERBS 1:7-9

- ⁷ Fear of the LORD is the foundation
of true knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and
discipline.
- ⁸ My child,* listen when your father
corrects you.
Don't neglect your mother's
instruction.
- ⁹ What you learn from them will
crown you with grace
and be a chain of honor around
your neck.

1:8 Hebrew My son; also in 1:10, 15.

Lord, I'm with David. I pause to pray for protection from those who wish us harm. Grant us the freedom and safety that comes as we draw ever closer to you. Amen.



GENESIS 5:1-7:24

This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,* he made them to be like himself. ²He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”

- ³When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth.
- ⁴After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.
- ⁶When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh.
- ⁷After the birth of* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters.
- ⁸Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.
- ⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.
- ¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, he

became the father of Mahalalel.

- ¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.
- ¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared.
- ¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters.
- ¹⁷Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.
- ¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.
- ²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah.
- ²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²³Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son.

²⁹Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, “May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed.”

³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

³¹Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

^{6:1}Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. ²The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”

⁴In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made

them.” ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

⁹This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. ¹⁰Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. ¹³So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!

¹⁴“Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶Leave an 18-inch opening* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

¹⁷“Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. ¹⁸But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals.”

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

^{7:1}When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. ²Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of

each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,* and take one pair of each of the others.³ Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood.⁴ Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth.⁷ He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives.⁸ With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground.⁹ They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah.¹⁰ After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky.¹² The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

¹³That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives.¹⁴ With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind.¹⁵ Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes.¹⁶ A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

¹⁷For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth.¹⁸ As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface.¹⁹ Finally, the

water covered even the highest mountains on the earth,²⁰ rising more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks.²¹ All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people.²² Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died.²³ God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat.²⁴ And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

5:1 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*; similarly in 5:2.

5:6 Or *the ancestor of*; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25.

5:7 Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 5:10, 13,

16, 19, 22, 26. **5:29** *Noah* sounds like a Hebrew term

that can mean “relief” or “comfort.” **6:2** Hebrew

daughters of men; also in 6:4. **6:3** Greek version reads

will not remain in. **6:14a** Traditionally rendered an

ark. **6:14b** Or *gopher wood*. **6:15** Hebrew *300 cubits*

[138 meters] *long, 50 cubits* [23 meters] *wide, and*

30 cubits [13.8 meters] *high*. **6:16** Hebrew *an opening*

of 1 cubit [46 centimeters]. **7:2** Hebrew *of each clean*

animal; similarly in 7:8. **7:20** Hebrew *15 cubits*

[6.9 meters].

MATTHEW 3:7–4:11

But when he [John the Baptist] saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize,* he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee God’s coming wrath?”

⁸Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.⁹ Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones.¹⁰ Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize with* water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and

with fire.* ¹²He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.”

¹³Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

¹⁵But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.*” So John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened* and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

^{4:1}Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ²For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³During that time the devil* came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.”

⁴But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say,

‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’*”

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

‘He will order his angels to protect you.
And they will hold you up with their hands
so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’*”

⁷Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’*”

⁸Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹“I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.”

¹⁰“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say,

‘You must worship the LORD your God
and serve only him.’*”

¹¹Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

3:7 Or coming to be baptized. **3:11a** Or in. **3:11b** Or in the Holy Spirit and in fire. **3:15** Or for we must fulfill all righteousness. **3:16** Some manuscripts read opened to him. **4:3** Greek the tempter. **4:4** Deut 8:3. **4:6** Ps 91:11-12. **4:7** Deut 6:16. **4:10** Deut 6:13.

PSALM 3:1-8

A psalm of David, regarding the time David fled from his son Absalom.

¹ O LORD, I have so many enemies;
so many are against me.

² So many are saying,
“God will never rescue him!”

*Interlude**

³ But you, O LORD, are a shield
around me;
you are my glory, the one who
holds my head high.

⁴ I cried out to the LORD,
and he answered me from his
holy mountain. *Interlude*

⁵ I lay down and slept,
yet I woke up in safety,
for the LORD was watching
over me.

⁶ I am not afraid of ten thousand
enemies
who surround me on
every side.

⁷ Arise, O LORD!
Rescue me, my God!
Slap all my enemies in the face!
Shatter the teeth of the wicked!

⁸ Victory comes from you, O LORD.
May you bless your people.

Interlude

3:2 Hebrew *Selah*. The meaning of this word is uncertain, though it is probably a musical or literary term. It is rendered *Interlude* throughout the Psalms.

PROVERBS 1:10-19

- ¹⁰ My child, if sinners entice you,
turn your back on them!
- ¹¹ They may say, “Come and join us.
Let’s hide and kill someone!
Just for fun, let’s ambush the
innocent!
- ¹² Let’s swallow them alive, like the
grave*;
let’s swallow them whole, like
those who go down to the pit
of death.
- ¹³ Think of the great things we’ll get!
We’ll fill our houses with all the
stuff we take.
- ¹⁴ Come, throw in your lot with us;
we’ll all share the loot.”

- ¹⁵ My child, don’t go along with
them!
Stay far away from their
paths.
- ¹⁶ They rush to commit evil deeds.
They hurry to commit murder.
- ¹⁷ If a bird sees a trap being set,
it knows to stay away.
- ¹⁸ But these people set an ambush for
themselves;
they are trying to get themselves
killed.
- ¹⁹ Such is the fate of all who are
greedy for money;
it robs them of life.

1:12 Hebrew like *Sheol*.

Lord, when the devil tempted Jesus, your truth protected him. Plant your truth deep into the hearts of our leaders so they—and our nation—can enjoy your protection. I pray our leaders will turn to you in times of turmoil and when deceit and lies tug at them. Amen.

**GENESIS 8:1-10:32**

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. ²The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. ³So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held

out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. ¹²He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

¹³Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. ¹⁴Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

¹⁸So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. ¹⁹And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.*

²¹And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. ²²As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night."

^{9:1}Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. ²All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

⁵"And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person's life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings* in his own image. ⁷Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth."

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹"I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth."

¹²Then God said, "I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. ¹³I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth.

¹⁴When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, ¹⁵and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. ¹⁶When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth." ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, "Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth."

¹⁸The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

²⁰After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

²⁴When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. ²⁵Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

"May Canaan be cursed!
May he be the lowest of servants
to his relatives."

²⁶Then Noah said,

"May the LORD, the God of Shem,
be blessed,
and may Canaan be his servant!

²⁷May God expand the territory of
Japheth!

May Japheth share the prosperity
of Shem,*

and may Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the great flood. ²⁹He lived 950 years, and then he died.

^{10:1}This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the great flood.

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.* ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that spread out to various lands, each identified by its own language, clan, and national identity.

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth. ⁹Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,* his name became proverbial. People would say, “This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.” ¹⁰He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came.*

¹⁵Canaan’s oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians.

Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,* ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Gergashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, ¹⁹and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth.* Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.

²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber.

²⁵Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means “division”), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother’s name was Joktan.

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan. ³⁰The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

³¹These were the descendants of Shem, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

³²These are the clans that descended from Noah’s sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. **8:5** Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. **8:13** Hebrew

On the first day of the first month; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived; see note on 8:13. 8:20 Hebrew every clean animal and every clean bird. 9:6 Or man; Hebrew reads ha-adam. 9:27 Hebrew May he live in the tents of Shem. 10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read Dodanim. 10:9 Hebrew a great hunter before the LORD; also in 10:9b. 10:10 Hebrew Shinar. 10:11 Or From that land Assyria went out. 10:14 Hebrew Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites. Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. 10:15 Hebrew ancestor of Heth. 10:21 Or Shem, whose older brother was Japheth. 10:24 Greek version reads Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah. Compare Luke 3:36.

MATTHEW 4:12-25

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. ¹³He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

- ¹⁵ “In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River, in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,
- ¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined.”*

¹⁷From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*”

¹⁸One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁹Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” ²⁰And they left their nets at once and followed him.

²¹A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. ²²They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

²³Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ²⁴News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. ²⁵Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people from Galilee, the Ten Towns,* Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.

4:15-16 Isa 9:1-2 (Greek version). **4:17** Or has come, or is coming soon. **4:25** Greek Decapolis.

PSALM 4:1-8

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.

- ¹ Answer me when I call to you,
O God who declares me innocent.
Free me from my troubles.
Have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- ² How long will you people ruin my reputation?
How long will you make groundless accusations?
How long will you continue your lies? *Interlude*
- ³ You can be sure of this:
The LORD set apart the godly for himself.
The LORD will answer when I call to him.
- ⁴ Don’t sin by letting anger control you.
Think about it overnight and remain silent. *Interlude*
- ⁵ Offer sacrifices in the right spirit, and trust the LORD.
- ⁶ Many people say, “Who will show us better times?”
Let your face smile on us, LORD.
- ⁷ You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine.
- ⁸ In peace I will lie down and sleep,

for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

PROVERBS 1:20-23

²⁰ Wisdom shouts in the streets.

She cries out in the public square.

²¹ She calls to the crowds along the main street,

to those gathered in front of the city gate:

²² “How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simpleminded?”

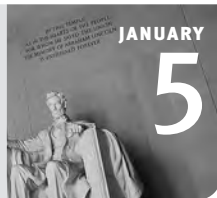
How long will you mockers relish your mocking?

How long will you fools hate knowledge?

²³ Come and listen to my counsel.

I’ll share my heart with you and make you wise.”

Lord, lead me onto your path—the one that’s narrow and sometimes rocky but always climbing straight toward you. Help every candidate standing for election this year also find footing on that path, Lord. Amen.



GENESIS 11:1-13:4

At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. ²As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there.

³They began saying to each other, “Let’s make bricks and harden them with fire.” (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) ⁴Then they said, “Come, let’s build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world.”

⁵But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶“Look!” he said. “The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! ⁷Come, let’s go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won’t be able to understand each other.”

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why the city was called Babel,* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

¹⁰This is the account of Shem’s family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of* Arphaxad.

¹¹After the birth of* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. ²¹After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. ²³After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

²⁷This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. ²⁹Meanwhile, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor's brother Haran.) ³⁰But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

³¹One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram's wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. ³²Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still in Haran.

^{12:1}The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

⁴So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the

people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, ⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants.*" And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. ⁹Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

¹⁰At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. ¹¹As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!'" ¹³So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you."

¹⁴And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone noticed Sarai's beauty. ¹⁵When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. ¹⁶Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. "What have you done to me?" he demanded. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out

of here!”²⁰ Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

^{13:1} So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned.² (Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.)³ From the Negev, they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before.⁴ This was the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he worshiped the LORD again.

11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*. **11:9** Or *Babylon*. *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “confusion.” **11:10** Or *the ancestor of*; also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. **11:11** Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. **11:12-13** Greek version reads ¹²*When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan.* ¹³*After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died.* Compare Luke 3:35-36. **11:32** Some ancient versions read *145 years*; compare 11:26 and 12:4. **12:7** Hebrew *seed*.

MATTHEW 5:1-26

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountain-side and sat down. His disciples gathered around him,² and he began to teach them.

³ “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,*
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

⁴ God blesses those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ God blesses those who are humble,
for they will inherit the whole earth.

⁶ God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice,*
for they will be satisfied.

⁷ God blesses those who are merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ God blesses those whose hearts are pure,
for they will see God.

⁹ God blesses those who work for peace,
for they will be called the children of God.

¹⁰ God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right,
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

¹¹ “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

¹⁷ “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰ “But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

²¹ “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder.

If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.* ²²But I say, if you are even angry with someone,* you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,* you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone,* you are in danger of the fires of hell.*

²³“So if you are presenting a sacrifice* at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

²⁵“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.*”

5:3 Greek *poor in spirit*. **5:6** Or *for righteousness*. **5:21** Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17. **5:22a** Some manuscripts add *without cause*. **5:22b** Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: *If you say to your brother, ‘Raca.’* **5:22c** Greek *if you say, ‘You fool.’* **5:22d** Greek *Gehenna*; also in 5:29, 30. **5:23** Greek *gift*; also in 5:24. **5:26** Greek *the last kodrantes* [i.e., quadrans].

PSALM 5:1-12

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by the flute.

- 1 O LORD, hear me as I pray;
pay attention to my groaning.
- 2 Listen to my cry for help, my King
and my God,
for I pray to no one but you.
- 3 Listen to my voice in the morning,
LORD.
Each morning I bring my
requests to you and wait
expectantly.
- 4 O God, you take no pleasure in
wickedness;
you cannot tolerate the sins
of the wicked.
- 5 Therefore, the proud may not
stand in your presence,
for you hate all who do evil.
- 6 You will destroy those who tell
lies.

The LORD detests murderers and deceivers.

- 7 Because of your unfailing love,
I can enter your house;
I will worship at your Temple
with deepest awe.
- 8 Lead me in the right path, O LORD,
or my enemies will conquer me.
Make your way plain for me to
follow.
- 9 My enemies cannot speak a
truthful word.
Their deepest desire is to destroy
others.
Their talk is foul, like the stench
from an open grave.
Their tongues are filled with
flattery.*
- 10 O God, declare them guilty.
Let them be caught in their own
traps.
Drive them away because of their
many sins,
for they have rebelled against
you.
- 11 But let all who take refuge in you
rejoice;
let them sing joyful praises
forever.
Spread your protection over
them,
that all who love your name
may be filled with joy.
- 12 For you bless the godly, O LORD;
you surround them with your
shield of love.

5:9 Greek version reads *with lies*. Compare Rom 3:13.

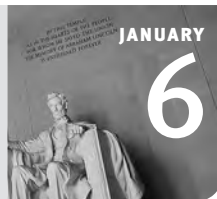
PROVERBS 1:24-28

- 24 “I [Wisdom] called you so often,
but you wouldn’t come.
I reached out to you, but you
paid no attention.
- 25 You ignored my advice
and rejected the correction
I offered.
- 26 So I will laugh when you are in
trouble!
I will mock you when disaster
overtakes you—
- 27 when calamity overtakes you like
a storm,

when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone,
and anguish and distress
overwhelm you.

²⁸ “When they cry for help, I will not answer.
Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me.”

Lord, our country isn't perfect. You know that, and you see us for who we are. So I pray for your salvation, trusting you'll give us hope and healing not because we deserve it, but because of your vast, unfailing mercy. Work in and through this nation, Lord. Amen.



GENESIS 13:5–15:21

Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. ⁶But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. ⁷So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

⁸Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! ⁹The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.”

¹⁰Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. ¹²So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. ¹³But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

¹⁴After Lot had gone, the LORD said

to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. ¹⁵I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants* as a permanent possession. ¹⁶And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.”

¹⁸So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

^{14:1} About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia,* King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim ²fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar).

³This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea*). ⁴For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

⁵One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. ⁷Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

⁸Then the rebel kings of Sodom,

Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea.* ⁹They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five. ¹⁰As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. ¹¹The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. ¹²They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

¹³But one of Lot’s men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram’s allies.

¹⁴When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer’s army until he caught up with them at Dan. ¹⁵There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

¹⁷After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).

¹⁸And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,* brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High,
who has defeated your enemies
for you.”

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

²¹The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.”

²²Abram replied to the king of Sodom, “I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich.’ ²⁴I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”

^{15:1}Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.”

²But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don’t even have a son? Since you’ve given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. ³You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.”

⁴Then the LORD said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” ⁵Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!”

⁶And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

⁷Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.”

⁸But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?”

⁹The LORD told him, “Bring me a

three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”¹⁰ So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half.¹¹ Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him.¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years.¹⁴ But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth.¹⁵ (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.)¹⁶ After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

¹⁷After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses.¹⁸ So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt* to the great Euphrates River—¹⁹the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites,²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites,²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

13:15 Hebrew *seed*; also in 13:16. **14:1** Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9. **14:3** Hebrew *Salt Sea*.

14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in 14:10. **14:18** Hebrew *El-Elyon*; also in 14:19, 20, 22.

15:18 Hebrew *the river of Egypt*, referring either to an eastern branch of the Nile River or to the Brook of Egypt in the Sinai (see Num 34:5).

MATTHEW 5:27-48

“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’*²⁸ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.²⁹ So if your eye—even your good eye*—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for

you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.³⁰ And if your hand—even your stronger hand*—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

³¹“You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’*³² But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

³³“You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’*³⁴ But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne.³⁵ And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King.³⁶ Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black.³⁷ Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

³⁸“You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’*³⁹ But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.⁴⁰ If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too.⁴¹ If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile,* carry it two miles.⁴² Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

⁴³“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’* and hate your enemy.⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies!* Pray for those who persecute you!⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.⁴⁶ If you love only those who

love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷If you are kind only to your friends,* how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. ⁴⁸But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

5:27 Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18. **5:29** Greek *your right eye*. **5:30** Greek *your right hand*. **5:31** Deut 24:1. **5:33** Num 30:2. **5:38** Greek *the law that says: 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'* Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21. **5:41** Greek *million* [4,854 feet or 1,478 meters]. **5:43** Lev 19:18. **5:44** Some manuscripts add *Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you. Compare Luke 6:27-28.* **5:47** Greek *your brothers*.

PSALM 6:1-10

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by an eight-stringed instrument.**

- ¹ O LORD, don't rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your rage.
- ² Have compassion on me, LORD,
for I am weak.
Heal me, LORD, for my bones are
in agony.
- ³ I am sick at heart.
How long, O LORD, until you
restore me?
- ⁴ Return, O LORD, and rescue me.
Save me because of your
unfailing love.
- ⁵ For the dead do not remember you.
Who can praise you from the
grave?*

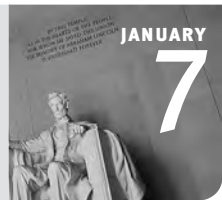
- ⁶ I am worn out from sobbing.
All night I flood my bed with
weeping,
drenching it with my tears.
- ⁷ My vision is blurred by grief;
my eyes are worn out because
of all my enemies.
- ⁸ Go away, all you who do evil,
for the LORD has heard my
weeping.
- ⁹ The LORD has heard my plea;
the LORD will answer my prayer.
- ¹⁰ May all my enemies be disgraced
and terrified.
May they suddenly turn back in
shame.

6:TITLE Hebrew with *stringed instruments*; according to the *sheminith*. **6:5** Hebrew from *Sheol?*

PROVERBS 1:29-33

- ²⁹ “For they hated knowledge
and chose not to fear the LORD.
- ³⁰ They rejected my [Wisdom’s]
advice
and paid no attention when I
corrected them.
- ³¹ Therefore, they must eat the bitter
fruit of living their own way,
choking on their own schemes.
- ³² For simpletons turn away from
me—to death.
Fools are destroyed by their own
clancy.
- ³³ But all who listen to me will live in
peace,
untroubled by fear of harm.”

Lord, what great counsel you offer! Help every elected official cry out to you for insight, value your wisdom beyond all measure, and courageously act on what you call them to do. And grant me that same courage, Lord. Amen.



GENESIS 16:1-18:15

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. ²So Sarai said to Abram, “The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.” And Abram agreed with

Sarai’s proposal. ³So Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

⁴So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress,

Sarai, with contempt. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, “This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she’s pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who’s wrong—you or me!”

⁶Abram replied, “Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit.” Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. ⁸The angel said to her, “Hagar, Sarai’s servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress, Sarai,” she replied.

⁹The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.” ¹⁰Then he added, “I will give you more descendants than you can count.”

¹¹And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God hears’), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress. ¹²This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.”

¹³Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.”* She also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” ¹⁴So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means “well of the Living One who sees me”). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.

^{17:1}When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. ²I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.”

³At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, ⁴“This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! ⁵What’s more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham,* for you will be the father of many nations. ⁶I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

⁷“I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants* after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God.”

⁹Then God said to Abraham, “Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. ¹⁰This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. ¹¹You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. ¹³All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.”

¹⁵Then God said to Abraham, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah.* ¹⁶And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants.”

¹⁷Then Abraham bowed down to

the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. “How could I become a father at the age of 100?” he thought. “And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?”¹⁸ So Abraham said to God, “May Ishmael live under your special blessing!”

¹⁹But God replied, “No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac,* and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant.²⁰ As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.²¹ But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.”²² When God had finished speaking, he left Abraham.

²³On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his household, including those born there and those he had bought. Then he circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, just as God had told him.²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised,²⁵ and Ishmael, his son, was thirteen.²⁶ Both Abraham and his son, Ishmael, were circumcised on that same day,²⁷ along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants. All were circumcised with him.

^{18:1}The LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day.² He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground.

³“My lord,” he said, “if it pleases you, stop here for a while.⁴ Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet.⁵ And since you’ve honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food

to refresh you before you continue on your journey.”

“All right,” they said. “Do as you have said.”

⁶So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, “Hurry! Get three large measures* of your best flour, knead it into dough, and bake some bread.”⁷ Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a tender calf and gave it to his servant, who quickly prepared it.⁸ When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

⁹“Where is Sarah, your wife?” the visitors asked.

“She’s inside the tent,” Abraham replied.

¹⁰Then one of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!”

Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent.¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children.¹² So she laughed silently to herself and said, “How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?”

¹³Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁵Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, “I didn’t laugh.”

But the LORD said, “No, you did laugh.”

16:13 Hebrew *El-roi*. **17:5** *Abram* means “exalted father”; *Abraham* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “father of many.” **17:7** Hebrew *seed*; also in 17:7b, 8, 9, 10, 19. **17:15** *Sarai* and *Sarah* both mean “princess”; the change in spelling may reflect the difference in dialect between Ur and Canaan. **17:19** *Isaac* means “he laughs.” **18:6** Hebrew *3 seahs*, about half a bushel or 22 liters.

MATTHEW 6:1-24

“Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.² When you give to

someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. ³But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

⁵“When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ⁶But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

⁷“When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.

¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today the food we need,*
¹² and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who
sin against us.

¹³ And don't let us yield to temptation,*
but rescue us from the evil one.*

¹⁴“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

¹⁶“And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷But when you fast, comb your hair* and wash your face. ¹⁸Then no one

will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

¹⁹“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

²²“Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. ²³But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

²⁴“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

6:11 Or Give us today our food for the day; or Give us today our food for tomorrow. **6:13a** Or And keep us from being tested. **6:13b** Or from evil. Some manuscripts add For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. **6:17** Greek anoint your head.

PSALM 7:1-17

A psalm of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush of the tribe of Benjamin.*

- 1 I come to you for protection,
O LORD my God.
Save me from my persecutors—
rescue me!
- 2 If you don't, they will maul me like
a lion,
tearing me to pieces with no one
to rescue me.
- 3 O LORD my God, if I have done
wrong
or am guilty of injustice,
4 if I have betrayed a friend
or plundered my enemy without
cause,
5 then let my enemies capture me.
Let them trample me into the
ground
and drag my honor in the dust.

Interlude

6 Arise, O LORD, in anger!
Stand up against the fury of my
enemies!
Wake up, my God, and bring
justice!

7 Gather the nations before you.
Rule over them from on high.

8 The LORD judges the nations.
Declare me righteous, O LORD,
for I am innocent, O Most High!

9 End the evil of those who are
wicked,
and defend the righteous.
For you look deep within the mind
and heart,
O righteous God.

10 God is my shield,
saving those whose hearts are
true and right.

11 God is an honest judge.
He is angry with the wicked
every day.

12 If a person does not repent,
God* will sharpen his sword;
he will bend and string his bow.

13 He will prepare his deadly weapons
and shoot his flaming arrows.

14 The wicked conceive evil;
they are pregnant with trouble
and give birth to lies.

15 They dig a deep pit to trap
others,
then fall into it themselves.

16 The trouble they make for others
backfires on them.
The violence they plan falls on
their own heads.

17 I will thank the LORD because he
is just;
I will sing praise to the name
of the LORD Most High.

7:TITLE Hebrew *A shiggaion*, probably indicating a musical setting for the psalm. 7:12 Hebrew *he*.

PROVERBS 2:1-5

1 My child,* listen to what I say,
and treasure my commands.

2 Tune your ears to wisdom,
and concentrate on
understanding.

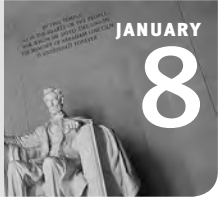
3 Cry out for insight,
and ask for understanding.

4 Search for them as you would
for silver;
seek them like hidden
treasures.

5 Then you will understand what
it means to fear the LORD,
and you will gain knowledge
of God.

2:1 Hebrew *My son*.

Lord, you and Abraham talked—a lot. He turned to you for advice and asked what you wanted him to do. Call our leaders toward that sort of friendship with you so your will can be lived out here in this country as in heaven. Amen.



GENESIS 18:16–19:38

Then the men got up from their meal and looked out toward Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way.

17“Should I hide my plan from Abraham?” the LORD asked. 18“For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. 19I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the

LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised.”

20So the LORD told Abraham, “I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. 21I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know.”

22The other men turned and headed toward Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham. 23Abraham approached him and said, “Will you sweep away

both the righteous and the wicked? ²⁴Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? ²⁵Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn't do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

²⁶And the LORD replied, "If I find fifty righteous people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake."

²⁷Then Abraham spoke again. "Since I have begun, let me speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose there are only forty-five righteous people rather than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?"

And the LORD said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five righteous people there."

²⁹Then Abraham pressed his request further. "Suppose there are only forty?"

And the LORD replied, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the forty."

³⁰"Please don't be angry, my Lord," Abraham pleaded. "Let me speak—suppose only thirty righteous people are found?"

And the LORD replied, "I will not destroy it if I find thirty."

³¹Then Abraham said, "Since I have dared to speak to the Lord, let me continue—suppose there are only twenty?"

And the LORD replied, "Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty."

³²Finally, Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me if I speak one more time. Suppose only ten are found there?"

And the LORD replied, "Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten."

³³When the LORD had finished his conversation with Abraham, he went on his way, and Abraham returned to his tent.

^{19:1}That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom.

Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground. ²"My lords," he said, "come to my home to wash your feet, and be my guests for the night. You may then get up early in the morning and be on your way again."

"Oh no," they replied. "We'll just spend the night out here in the city square."

³But Lot insisted, so at last they went home with him. Lot prepared a feast for them, complete with fresh bread made without yeast, and they ate. ⁴But before they retired for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. ⁵They shouted to Lot, "Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!"

⁶So Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him. ⁷"Please, my brothers," he begged, "don't do such a wicked thing. ⁸Look, I have two virgin daughters. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do with them as you wish. But please, leave these men alone, for they are my guests and are under my protection."

⁹"Stand back!" they shouted. "This fellow came to town as an outsider, and now he's acting like our judge! We'll treat you far worse than those other men!" And they lunged toward Lot to break down the door.

¹⁰But the two angels* reached out, pulled Lot into the house, and bolted the door. ¹¹Then they blinded all the men, young and old, who were at the door of the house, so they gave up trying to get inside.

¹²Meanwhile, the angels questioned Lot. "Do you have any other relatives here in the city?" they asked. "Get them out of this place—your sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. ¹³For we are about to destroy this city completely. The outcry against this place is so great it has reached the LORD, and he has sent us to destroy it."

¹⁴So Lot rushed out to tell his daughters' fiancés, "Quick, get out of the city! The LORD is about to destroy it." But the young men thought he was only joking.

¹⁵At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. "Hurry," they said to Lot. "Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out right now, or you will be swept away in the destruction of the city!"

¹⁶When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful. ¹⁷When they were safely out of the city, one of the angels ordered, "Run for your lives! And don't look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away!"

¹⁸"Oh no, my lord!" Lot begged. ¹⁹"You have been so gracious to me and saved my life, and you have shown such great kindness. But I cannot go to the mountains. Disaster would catch up to me there, and I would soon die. ²⁰See, there is a small village nearby. Please let me go there instead; don't you see how small it is? Then my life will be saved."

²¹"All right," the angel said, "I will grant your request. I will not destroy the little village. ²²But hurry! Escape to it, for I can do nothing until you arrive there." (This explains why that village was known as Zoar, which means "little place.")

²³Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon. ²⁴Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁵He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation. ²⁶But Lot's wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt.

²⁷Abraham got up early that morning and hurried out to the place where he had stood in the LORD's presence. ²⁸He looked out across the plain toward Sodom and Gomorrah and watched as

columns of smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace.

²⁹But God had listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe, removing him from the disaster that engulfed the cities on the plain.

³⁰Afterward Lot left Zoar because he was afraid of the people there, and he went to live in a cave in the mountains with his two daughters. ³¹One day the older daughter said to her sister, "There are no men left anywhere in this entire area, so we can't get married like everyone else. And our father will soon be too old to have children. ³²Come, let's get him drunk with wine, and then we will have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father."

³³So that night they got him drunk with wine, and the older daughter went in and had intercourse with her father. He was unaware of her lying down or getting up again.

³⁴The next morning the older daughter said to her younger sister, "I had sex with our father last night. Let's get him drunk with wine again tonight, and you go in and have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father." ³⁵So that night they got him drunk with wine again, and the younger daughter went in and had intercourse with him. As before, he was unaware of her lying down or getting up again.

³⁶As a result, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their own father. ³⁷When the older daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Moab.* He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Moabites. ³⁸When the younger daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Ben-ammi.* He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Ammonites.

19:10 Hebrew *men*; also in 19:12, 16. **19:37** *Moab* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "from father."
19:38 *Ben-ammi* means "son of my kinsman."

MATTHEW 6:25–7:14

"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more

than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, ²⁹yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

³¹"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' ³²These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³Seek the Kingdom of God* above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

³⁴"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

^{7:1}"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. ²For you will be treated as you treat others.* The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.*

³"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye* when you have a log in your own? ⁴How can you think of saying to your friend,* 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? ⁵Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

⁶"Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy.* Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

⁷"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seek-

ing, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹"You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

¹²"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

¹³"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell* is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."

6:33 Some manuscripts do not include *of God*.

7:2a Or *For God will judge you as you judge others*.

7:2b Or *The measure you give will be the measure you get back*.

7:3 Greek *your brother's eye*; also in **7:5**. **7:4** Greek *your brother*. **7:6** Greek *Don't give the sacred to dogs*. **7:13** Greek *The road that leads to destruction*.

PSALM 8:1-9

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument.**

- 1 O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!
Your glory is higher than the heavens.
- 2 You have taught children and infants
to tell of your strength,*
silencing your enemies
and all who oppose you.
- 3 When I look at the night sky and
see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set
in place—
- 4 what are mere mortals that you
should think about them,
human beings that you should
care for them?*

- 5 Yet you made them only a little lower than God* and crowned them* with glory and honor.
- 6 You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—
- 7 the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals,
- 8 the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.
- 9 O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

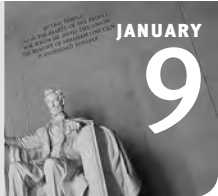
8:TITLE Hebrew *according to the gittith*. **8:2** Greek version reads *to give you praise*. Compare Matt 21:16. **8:4** Hebrew *what is man that you should think of him, / the son of man that you should care for him?* **8:5a** Or *Yet you made them only a little lower than the angels*; Hebrew reads *Yet you made him [i.e., man] a little lower than Elohim*. **8:5b** Hebrew *him [i.e., man]*; similarly in 8:6.

PROVERBS 2:6-15

- 6 For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

- 7 He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.
- 8 He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.
- 9 Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go.
- 10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy.
- 11 Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe.
- 12 Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted.
- 13 These men turn from the right way to walk down dark paths.
- 14 They take pleasure in doing wrong, and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil.
- 15 Their actions are crooked, and their ways are wrong.

Lord, the air is thick with promises and plans. But wisdom begins with knowing you, and no plan apart from yours will stand. I pray all elected officials will ask you what you would have them do, where you would lead this nation. Amen.



GENESIS 20:1–22:24

Abraham moved south to the Negev and lived for a while between Kadesh and Shur, and then he moved on to Gerar. While living there as a foreigner, ²Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by saying, “She is my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace.

³But that night God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him, “You are a dead man, for that woman you have taken is already married!”

⁴But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, “Lord, will you

destroy an innocent nation? ⁵Didn’t Abraham tell me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘Yes, he is my brother.’ I acted in complete innocence! My hands are clean.”

⁶In the dream God responded, “Yes, I know you are innocent. That’s why I kept you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you touch her. ⁷Now return the woman to her husband, and he will pray for you, for he is a prophet. Then you will live. But if you don’t return her to him, you can be sure that you and all your people will die.”

⁸Abimelech got up early the next morning and quickly called all his

servants together. When he told them what had happened, his men were terrified. ⁹Then Abimelech called for Abraham. “What have you done to us?” he demanded. “What crime have I committed that deserves treatment like this, making me and my kingdom guilty of this great sin? No one should ever do what you have done! ¹⁰Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?”

¹¹Abraham replied, “I thought, ‘This is a godless place. They will want my wife and will kill me to get her.’ ¹²And she really is my sister, for we both have the same father, but different mothers. And I married her. ¹³When God called me to leave my father’s home and to travel from place to place, I told her, ‘Do me a favor. Wherever we go, tell the people that I am your brother.’”

¹⁴Then Abimelech took some of his sheep and goats, cattle, and male and female servants, and he presented them to Abraham. He also returned his wife, Sarah, to him. ¹⁵Then Abimelech said, “Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live.” ¹⁶And he said to Sarah, “Look, I am giving your ‘brother’ 1,000 pieces of silver* in the presence of all these witnesses. This is to compensate you for any wrong I may have done to you. This will settle any claim against me, and your reputation is cleared.”

¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, so they could have children. ¹⁸For the LORD had caused all the women to be infertile because of what happened with Abraham’s wife, Sarah.

^{21:1}The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. ²She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. ³And Abraham named their son Isaac. ⁴Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. ⁵Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

⁶And Sarah declared, “God has brought me laughter.* All who hear about this will laugh with me. ⁷Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!”

⁸When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned, Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion. ⁹But Sarah saw Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—making fun of her son, Isaac.* ¹⁰So she turned to Abraham and demanded, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won’t have it!”

¹¹This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. ¹²But God told Abraham, “Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. ¹³But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar’s son because he is your son, too.”

¹⁴So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food and a container of water, and strapped them on Hagar’s shoulders. Then he sent her away with their son, and she wandered aimlessly in the wilderness of Beersheba.

¹⁵When the water was gone, she put the boy in the shade of a bush. ¹⁶Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards* away. “I don’t want to watch the boy die,” she said, as she burst into tears.

¹⁷But God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, “Hagar, what’s wrong? Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. ¹⁸Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.”

¹⁹Then God opened Hagar’s eyes, and she saw a well full of water. She quickly filled her water container and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness. He became a skillful archer, ²¹and he settled in

the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of Egypt.

²²About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army commander, to visit Abraham. "God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do," Abimelech said. ²³"Swear to me in God's name that you will never deceive me, my children, or any of my descendants. I have been loyal to you, so now swear that you will be loyal to me and to this country where you are living as a foreigner."

²⁴Abraham replied, "Yes, I swear to it!" ²⁵Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had taken by force from Abraham's servants.

²⁶"This is the first I've heard of it," Abimelech answered. "I have no idea who is responsible. You have never complained about this before."

²⁷Abraham then gave some of his sheep, goats, and cattle to Abimelech, and they made a treaty. ²⁸But Abraham also took seven additional female lambs and set them off by themselves. ²⁹Abimelech asked, "Why have you set these seven apart from the others?"

³⁰Abraham replied, "Please accept these seven lambs to show your agreement that I dug this well." ³¹Then he named the place Beersheba (which means "well of the oath"), because that was where they had sworn the oath.

³²After making their covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech left with Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned home to the land of the Philistines. ³³Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he worshiped the LORD, the Eternal God.* ³⁴And Abraham lived as a foreigner in Philistine country for a long time.

^{22:1}Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called.

"Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

²"Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and

sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

³The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵"Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back."

⁶So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, ⁷Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?"

⁸"God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

⁹When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. ¹¹At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!"

¹²"Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."

¹³Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. ¹⁴Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means "the LORD will provide"). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: "On

the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

¹⁵Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. ¹⁶“This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that ¹⁷I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants* beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. ¹⁸And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”

¹⁹Then they returned to the servants and traveled back to Beersheba, where Abraham continued to live.

²⁰Soon after this, Abraham heard that Milcah, his brother Nahor’s wife, had borne Nahor eight sons. ²¹The oldest was named Uz, the next oldest was Buz, followed by Kemuel (the ancestor of the Arameans), ²²Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlahph, and Bethuel. ²³(Bethuel became the father of Rebekah.) In addition to these eight sons from Milcah, ²⁴Nahor had four other children from his concubine Reumah. Their names were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

20:16 Hebrew 1,000 [*shekels*] of silver, about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight. **21:6** The name *Isaac* means “he laughs.” **21:9** As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks of *her son, Isaac*. **21:16** Hebrew a *bowshot*. **21:33** Hebrew *El-Olam*. **22:17** Hebrew *seed*; also in 22:17b, 18.

MATTHEW 7:15-29

“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. ¹⁶You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. ¹⁹So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

²¹“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²²On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ ²³But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

²⁴“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.

PSALM 9:1-12

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune “Death of the Son.”

- 1 I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.
- 2 I will be filled with joy because of you.
I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.
- 3 My enemies retreated;
they staggered and died when you appeared.
- 4 For you have judged in my favor;
from your throne you have judged with fairness.
- 5 You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have erased their names forever.
- 6 The enemy is finished, in endless ruins;

the cities you uprooted are now forgotten.

- 7 But the LORD reigns forever, executing judgment from his throne.
- 8 He will judge the world with justice and rule the nations with fairness.
- 9 The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.
- 10 Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O LORD, do not abandon those who search for you.
- 11 Sing praises to the LORD who reigns in Jerusalem.* Tell the world about his unforgettable deeds.
- 12 For he who avenges murder cares for the helpless. He does not ignore the cries of those who suffer.

9:11 Hebrew *Zion*; also in 9:14.

PROVERBS 2:16-22

- 16 Wisdom will save you from the immoral woman, from the seductive words of the promiscuous woman.
- 17 She has abandoned her husband and ignores the covenant she made before God.
- 18 Entering her house leads to death; it is the road to the grave.*
- 19 The man who visits her is doomed. He will never reach the paths of life.
- 20 Follow the steps of good men instead, and stay on the paths of the righteous.
- 21 For only the godly will live in the land, and those with integrity will remain in it.
- 22 But the wicked will be removed from the land, and the treacherous will be uprooted.

2:18 Hebrew *to the spirits of the dead*.

Lord, sometimes what's happening in this country feels out of control. We're swept up in a swirl of charges and counter-charges, lies and half-truths. But you are Truth—and you can handle it all. I put my hope in you, Lord. Help our leaders do the same. Amen.



GENESIS 23:1–24:51

When Sarah was 127 years old, ²she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.

³Then, leaving her body, he said to the Hittite elders, ⁴“Here I am, a stranger and a foreigner among you. Please sell me a piece of land so I can give my wife a proper burial.”

⁵The Hittites replied to Abraham, ⁶“Listen, my lord, you are an honored prince among us. Choose the finest of our tombs and bury her there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way.”

⁷Then Abraham bowed low before the Hittites ⁸and said, “Since you are

willing to help me in this way, be so kind as to ask Ephron son of Zohar ⁹to let me buy his cave at Machpelah, down at the end of his field. I will pay the full price in the presence of witnesses, so I will have a permanent burial place for my family.”

¹⁰Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered Abraham as the others listened, speaking publicly before all the Hittite elders of the town. ¹¹“No, my lord,” he said to Abraham, “please listen to me. I will give you the field and the cave. Here in the presence of my people, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead.”

¹²Abraham again bowed low before the citizens of the land, ¹³and

he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. “No, listen to me. I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there.”

¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵“My lord, please listen to me. The land is worth 400 pieces* of silver, but what is that between friends? Go ahead and bury your dead.”

¹⁶So Abraham agreed to Ephron’s price and paid the amount he had suggested—400 pieces of silver, weighed according to the market standard. The Hittite elders witnessed the transaction.

¹⁷So Abraham bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah, near Mamre. This included the field itself, the cave that was in it, and all the surrounding trees. ¹⁸It was transferred to Abraham as his permanent possession in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate. ¹⁹Then Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre (also called Hebron). ²⁰So the field and the cave were transferred from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place.

^{24:1}Abraham was now a very old man, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. ²One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, “Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh. ³Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. ⁴Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac.”

⁵The servant asked, “But what if I can’t find a young woman who is willing to travel so far from home? Should I then take Isaac there to live among your relatives in the land you came from?”

⁶“No!” Abraham responded. “Be careful never to take my son there. ⁷For the LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to my descendants.* He will send his angel ahead of you, and

he will see to it that you find a wife there for my son. ⁸If she is unwilling to come back with you, then you are free from this oath of mine. But under no circumstances are you to take my son there.”

⁹So the servant took an oath by putting his hand under the thigh of his master, Abraham. He swore to follow Abraham’s instructions. ¹⁰Then he loaded ten of Abraham’s camels with all kinds of expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled to distant Aram-naharaim. There he went to the town where Abraham’s brother Nahor had settled. ¹¹He made the camels kneel beside a well just outside the town. It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water.

¹²“O LORD, God of my master, Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham. ¹³See, I am standing here beside this spring, and the young women of the town are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴This is my request. I will ask one of them, ‘Please give me a drink from your jug.’ If she says, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’—let her be the one you have selected as Isaac’s wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master.”

¹⁵Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham’s brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. ¹⁶Rebekah was very beautiful and old enough to be married, but she was still a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up again. ¹⁷Running over to her, the servant said, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.”

¹⁸“Yes, my lord,” she answered, “have a drink.” And she quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and gave him a drink. ¹⁹When she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough to drink.” ²⁰So she

quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw water for all his camels.

²¹The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the LORD had given him success in his mission. ²²Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets* for her wrists.

²³“Whose daughter are you?” he asked. “And please tell me, would your father have any room to put us up for the night?”

²⁴“I am the daughter of Bethuel,” she replied. “My grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. ²⁵Yes, we have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and we have room for guests.”

²⁶The man bowed low and worshiped the LORD. ²⁷“Praise the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham,” he said. “The LORD has shown unfailing love and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master’s relatives.”

²⁸The young woman ran home to tell her family everything that had happened. ²⁹Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, who ran out to meet the man at the spring. ³⁰He had seen the nose-ring and the bracelets on his sister’s wrists, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man had said. So he rushed out to the spring, where the man was still standing beside his camels. ³¹Laban said to him, “Come and stay with us, you who are blessed by the LORD! Why are you standing here outside the town when I have a room all ready for you and a place prepared for the camels?”

³²So the man went home with Laban, and Laban unloaded the camels, gave him straw for their bedding, fed them, and provided water for the man and the camel drivers to wash their feet. ³³Then food was served. But Abraham’s servant said, “I don’t want to eat until I have told you why I have come.”

“All right,” Laban said, “tell us.”

³⁴“I am Abraham’s servant,” he explained. ³⁵“And the LORD has greatly

blessed my master; he has become a wealthy man. The LORD has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many male and female servants and camels and donkeys.

³⁶“When Sarah, my master’s wife, was very old, she gave birth to my master’s son, and my master has given him everything he owns. ³⁷And my master made me take an oath. He said, ‘Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. ³⁸Go instead to my father’s house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son.’

³⁹“But I said to my master, ‘What if I can’t find a young woman who is willing to go back with me?’ ⁴⁰He responded, ‘The LORD, in whose presence I have lived, will send his angel with you and will make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father’s family. ⁴¹Then you will have fulfilled your obligation. But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her go with you, you will be free from my oath.’

⁴²“So today when I came to the spring, I prayed this prayer: ‘O LORD, God of my master, Abraham, please give me success on this mission. ⁴³See, I am standing here beside this spring. This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, ‘Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.’ ⁴⁴If she says, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too,’ let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master’s son.’

⁴⁵“Before I had finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’ ⁴⁶She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’ So I drank, and then she watered the camels.

⁴⁷“Then I asked, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She replied, ‘I am the

daughter of Bethuel, and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah.’ So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.

⁴⁸“Then I bowed low and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me straight to my master’s niece to be his son’s wife. ⁴⁹So tell me—will you or won’t you show unflinching love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I’ll know what to do next.”

⁵⁰Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “The LORD has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. ⁵¹Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has directed.”

23:15 Hebrew *400 shekels*, about 10 pounds or 4.6 kilograms in weight; also in 23:16. **24:7** Hebrew *seed*; also in 24:60. **24:22** Hebrew *a gold nose-ring weighing a beka* [0.2 ounces or 6 grams] and *two gold bracelets weighing 10 [shekels]* [4 ounces or 114 grams].

MATTHEW 8:1-17

Large crowds followed Jesus as he came down the mountainside. ²Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. “Lord,” the man said, “if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean.”

³Jesus reached out and touched him. “I am willing,” he said. “Be healed!” And instantly the leprosy disappeared. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, “Don’t tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy.* This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed.”

⁵When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman officer* came and pleaded with him, ⁶“Lord, my young servant* lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain.”

⁷Jesus said, “I will come and heal him.”

⁸But the officer said, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed.

⁹I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, ‘Go,’ and they go, or ‘Come,’ and they come. And if I say to my slaves, ‘Do this,’ they do it.”

¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to those who were following him, he said, “I tell you the truth, I haven’t seen faith like this in all Israel! ¹¹And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. ¹²But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

¹³Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, “Go back home. Because you believed, it has happened.” And the young servant was healed that same hour.

¹⁴When Jesus arrived at Peter’s house, Peter’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. ¹⁵But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. Then she got up and prepared a meal for him.

¹⁶That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and he healed all the sick. ¹⁷This fulfilled the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, who said,

“He took our sicknesses
and removed our diseases.”*

8:4 See Lev 14:2-32. **8:5** Greek *a centurion*; similarly in 8:8, 13. **8:6** Or *child*; also in 8:13. **8:17** Isa 53:4.

PSALM 9:13-20

¹³ LORD, have mercy on me.
See how my enemies
torment me.

Snatch me back from the
jaws of death.

¹⁴ Save me so I can praise you
publicly at Jerusalem’s gates,
so I can rejoice that you have
rescued me.

May your descendants be strong and conquer the cities of their enemies.”

⁶¹Then Rebekah and her servant girls mounted the camels and followed the man. So Abraham’s servant took Rebekah and went on his way.

⁶²Meanwhile, Isaac, whose home was in the Negev, had returned from Beer-lahai-roi. ⁶³One evening as he was walking and meditating in the fields, he looked up and saw the camels coming. ⁶⁴When Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac, she quickly dismounted from her camel. ⁶⁵“Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?” she asked the servant.

And he replied, “It is my master.” So Rebekah covered her face with her veil. ⁶⁶Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done.

⁶⁷And Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah’s tent, and she became his wife. He loved her deeply, and she was a special comfort to him after the death of his mother.

^{25:1}Abraham married another wife, whose name was Keturah. ²She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan’s descendants were the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites. ⁴Midian’s sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. These were all descendants of Abraham through Keturah.

⁵Abraham gave everything he owned to his son Isaac. ⁶But before he died, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them off to a land in the east, away from Isaac.

⁷Abraham lived for 175 years, ⁸and he died at a ripe old age, having lived a long and satisfying life. He breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. ⁹His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite. ¹⁰This was the field Abraham had purchased from the Hittites and where he had buried his wife Sarah. ¹¹After Abraham’s death, God blessed his son

Isaac, who settled near Beer-lahai-roi in the Negev.

¹²This is the account of the family of Ishmael, the son of Abraham through Hagar, Sarah’s Egyptian servant. ¹³Here is a list, by their names and clans, of Ishmael’s descendants: The oldest was Nebaioth, followed by Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶These twelve sons of Ishmael became the founders of twelve tribes named after them, listed according to the places they settled and camped. ¹⁷Ishmael lived for 137 years. Then he breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. ¹⁸Ishmael’s descendants occupied the region from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt in the direction of Asshur. There they lived in open hostility toward all their relatives.*

¹⁹This is the account of the family of Isaac, the son of Abraham. ²⁰When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan-aram and the sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹Isaac pleaded with the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was unable to have children. The LORD answered Isaac’s prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. ²²But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the LORD about it. “Why is this happening to me?” she asked.

²³And the LORD told her, “The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son.”

²⁴And when the time came to give birth, Rebekah discovered that she did indeed have twins! ²⁵The first one was very red at birth and covered with thick hair like a fur coat. So they named him Esau.* ²⁶Then the other twin was born with his hand grasping Esau’s heel. So they named him Jacob.* Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born.

²⁷As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. ²⁸Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. ³⁰Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew!" (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means "red.")

³¹"All right," Jacob replied, "but trade me your rights as the firstborn son."

³²"Look, I'm dying of starvation!" said Esau. "What good is my birthright to me now?"

³³But Jacob said, "First you must swear that your birthright is mine." So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob.

³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn.

^{26:1}A severe famine now struck the land, as had happened before in Abraham's time. So Isaac moved to Gerar, where Abimelech, king of the Philistines, lived.

²The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt, but do as I tell you. ³Live here as a foreigner in this land, and I will be with you and bless you. I hereby confirm that I will give all these lands to you and your descendants,* just as I solemnly promised Abraham, your father. ⁴I will cause your descendants to become as numerous as the stars of the sky, and I will give them all these lands. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed. ⁵I will do this because Abraham listened to me and obeyed all my requirements, commands, decrees, and instructions."

⁶So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

⁷When the men who lived there asked Isaac about his wife, Rebekah,

he said, "She is my sister." He was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "They will kill me to get her, because she is so beautiful." ⁸But some time later, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out his window and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah.

⁹Immediately, Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, "She is obviously your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?"

"Because I was afraid someone would kill me to get her from me," Isaac replied.

¹⁰"How could you do this to us?" Abimelech exclaimed. "One of my people might easily have taken your wife and slept with her, and you would have made us guilty of great sin."

¹¹Then Abimelech issued a public proclamation: "Anyone who touches this man or his wife will be put to death!"

¹²When Isaac planted his crops that year, he harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, for the LORD blessed him. ¹³He became a very rich man, and his wealth continued to grow. ¹⁴He acquired so many flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and servants that the Philistines became jealous of him. ¹⁵So the Philistines filled up all of Isaac's wells with dirt. These were the wells that had been dug by the servants of his father, Abraham.

¹⁶Finally, Abimelech ordered Isaac to leave the country. "Go somewhere else," he said, "for you have become too powerful for us."

^{25:18} The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

^{25:25} *Esau* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "hair." ^{25:26} *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for "heel" and "deceiver." ^{26:3} Hebrew *seed*; also in ^{26:4}, ²⁴.

MATTHEW 8:18-34

When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he instructed his disciples to cross to the other side of the lake.

¹⁹Then one of the teachers of religious law said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

²⁰But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests,

but the Son of Man* has no place even to lay his head.”

²¹Another of his disciples said, “Lord, first let me return home and bury my father.”

²²But Jesus told him, “Follow me now. Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead.*”

²³Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. ²⁴Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

²⁶Jesus responded, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm.

²⁷The disciples were amazed. “Who is this man?” they asked. “Even the winds and waves obey him!”

²⁸When Jesus arrived on the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gadarenes,* two men who were possessed by demons met him. They lived in a cemetery and were so violent that no one could go through that area.

²⁹They began screaming at him, “Why are you interfering with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before God’s appointed time?”

³⁰There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding in the distance.

³¹So the demons begged, “If you cast us out, send us into that herd of pigs.”

³²“All right, go!” Jesus commanded them. So the demons came out of the men and entered the pigs, and the whole herd plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

³³The herdsmen fled to the nearby town, telling everyone what happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴Then the entire town came out to meet Jesus, but they begged him to go away and leave them alone.

8:20 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

8:22 Greek *Let the dead bury their own dead.*

8:28 Other manuscripts read *Gerasenes*; still others read *Gergesenes*. Compare Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26.

PSALM 10:1-15

¹ O LORD, why do you stand so far away?

Why do you hide when I am in trouble?

² The wicked arrogantly hunt down the poor.

Let them be caught in the evil they plan for others.

³ For they brag about their evil desires;

they praise the greedy and curse the LORD.

⁴ The wicked are too proud to seek God.

They seem to think that God is dead.

⁵ Yet they succeed in everything they do.

They do not see your punishment awaiting them.

They sneer at all their enemies.

⁶ They think, “Nothing bad will ever happen to us!

We will be free of trouble forever!”

⁷ Their mouths are full of cursing, lies, and threats.*

Trouble and evil are on the tips of their tongues.

⁸ They lurk in ambush in the villages,

waiting to murder innocent people.

They are always searching for helpless victims.

⁹ Like lions crouched in hiding, they wait to pounce on the helpless.

Like hunters they capture the helpless

and drag them away in nets.

¹⁰ Their helpless victims are crushed; they fall beneath the strength of the wicked.

¹¹ The wicked think, “God isn’t watching us!

He has closed his eyes and won’t even see what we do!”

¹² Arise, O LORD!

Punish the wicked, O God!

Do not ignore the helpless!

- 13 Why do the wicked get away with despising God?
They think, “God will never call us to account.”
- 14 But you see the trouble and grief they cause.
You take note of it and punish them.
The helpless put their trust in you.
You defend the orphans.
- 15 Break the arms of these wicked, evil people!

Go after them until the last one is destroyed.

10:7 Greek version reads *cursing and bitterness*. Compare Rom 3:14.

PROVERBS 3:7-8

- 7 Don’t be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil.
- 8 Then you will have healing for your body
and strength for your bones.

Lord, it wasn’t fair that Isaac had to keep digging wells, but it brought peace. Thanks for his example. Bring peace to our land, too, both within and beyond our borders. Give our leaders—all of them—hearts and minds for peace. Amen.



GENESIS 26:17–27:46

So Isaac moved away to the Gerar Valley, where he set up their tents and settled down. 18He reopened the wells his father had dug, which the Philistines had filled in after Abraham’s death. Isaac also restored the names Abraham had given them.

19Isaac’s servants also dug in the Gerar Valley and discovered a well of fresh water. 20But then the shepherds from Gerar came and claimed the spring. “This is our water,” they said, and they argued over it with Isaac’s herdsmen. So Isaac named the well Esek (which means “argument”). 21Isaac’s men then dug another well, but again there was a dispute over it. So Isaac named it Sitnah (which means “hostility”). 22Abandoning that one, Isaac moved on and dug another well. This time there was no dispute over it, so Isaac named the place Rehoboth (which means “open space”), for he said, “At last the LORD has created enough space for us to prosper in this land.”

23From there Isaac moved to Beer-sheba, 24where the LORD appeared to him on the night of his arrival. “I am the God of your father, Abraham,” he said. “Do not be afraid, for I am with

you and will bless you. I will multiply your descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of my promise to Abraham, my servant.” 25Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug another well.

26One day King Abimelech came from Gerar with his adviser, Ahuzzath, and also Phicol, his army commander. 27“Why have you come here?” Isaac asked. “You obviously hate me, since you kicked me off your land.”

28They replied, “We can plainly see that the LORD is with you. So we want to enter into a sworn treaty with you. Let’s make a covenant. 29Swear that you will not harm us, just as we have never troubled you. We have always treated you well, and we sent you away from us in peace. And now look how the LORD has blessed you!”

30So Isaac prepared a covenant feast to celebrate the treaty, and they ate and drank together. 31Early the next morning, they each took a solemn oath not to interfere with each other. Then Isaac sent them home again, and they left him in peace.

32That very day Isaac’s servants came and told him about a new well

they had dug. “We’ve found water!” they exclaimed.³³ So Isaac named the well Shibah (which means “oath”). And to this day the town that grew up there is called Beersheba (which means “well of the oath”).

³⁴At the age of forty, Esau married two Hittite wives: Judith, the daughter of Beeri, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon.³⁵ But Esau’s wives made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.

^{27:1}One day when Isaac was old and turning blind, he called for Esau, his older son, and said, “My son.”

“Yes, Father?” Esau replied.

²“I am an old man now,” Isaac said, “and I don’t know when I may die. ³Take your bow and a quiver full of arrows, and go out into the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴Prepare my favorite dish, and bring it here for me to eat. Then I will pronounce the blessing that belongs to you, my firstborn son, before I die.”

⁵But Rebekah overheard what Isaac had said to his son Esau. So when Esau left to hunt for the wild game, ⁶she said to her son Jacob, “Listen. I overheard your father say to Esau, ⁷‘Bring me some wild game and prepare me a delicious meal. Then I will bless you in the LORD’s presence before I die.’ ⁸Now, my son, listen to me. Do exactly as I tell you. ⁹Go out to the flocks, and bring me two fine young goats. I’ll use them to prepare your father’s favorite dish. ¹⁰Then take the food to your father so he can eat it and bless you before he dies.”

¹¹“But look,” Jacob replied to Rebekah, “my brother, Esau, is a hairy man, and my skin is smooth. ¹²What if my father touches me? He’ll see that I’m trying to trick him, and then he’ll curse me instead of blessing me.”

¹³But his mother replied, “Then let the curse fall on me, my son! Just do what I tell you. Go out and get the goats for me!”

¹⁴So Jacob went out and got the young goats for his mother. Rebekah took them and prepared a delicious meal, just the way Isaac liked it. ¹⁵Then

she took Esau’s favorite clothes, which were there in the house, and gave them to her younger son, Jacob. ¹⁶She covered his arms and the smooth part of his neck with the skin of the young goats. ¹⁷Then she gave Jacob the delicious meal, including freshly baked bread.

¹⁸So Jacob took the food to his father. “My father?” he said.

“Yes, my son,” Isaac answered. “Who are you—Esau or Jacob?”

¹⁹Jacob replied, “It’s Esau, your firstborn son. I’ve done as you told me. Here is the wild game. Now sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing.”

²⁰Isaac asked, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

“The LORD your God put it in my path!” Jacob replied.

²¹Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come closer so I can touch you and make sure that you really are Esau.” ²²So Jacob went closer to his father, and Isaac touched him. “The voice is Jacob’s, but the hands are Esau’s,” Isaac said. ²³But he did not recognize Jacob, because Jacob’s hands felt hairy just like Esau’s. So Isaac prepared to bless Jacob. ²⁴“But are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“Yes, I am,” Jacob replied.

²⁵Then Isaac said, “Now, my son, bring me the wild game. Let me eat it, and then I will give you my blessing.” So Jacob took the food to his father, and Isaac ate it. He also drank the wine that Jacob served him. ²⁶Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come a little closer and kiss me, my son.”

²⁷So Jacob went over and kissed him. And when Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he was finally convinced, and he blessed his son. He said, “Ah! The smell of my son is like the smell of the outdoors, which the LORD has blessed!”

²⁸ “From the dew of heaven
and the richness of the earth,
may God always give you
abundant harvests of grain
and bountiful new wine.

²⁹ May many nations become your servants,
and may they bow down to you.
May you be the master over your brothers,
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.
All who curse you will be cursed,
and all who bless you will be blessed."

³⁰As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and almost before Jacob had left his father, Esau returned from his hunt. ³¹Esau prepared a delicious meal and brought it to his father. Then he said, "Sit up, my father, and eat my wild game so you can give me your blessing."

³²But Isaac asked him, "Who are you?"

Esau replied, "It's your son, your firstborn son, Esau."

³³Isaac began to tremble uncontrollably and said, "Then who just served me wild game? I have already eaten it, and I blessed him just before you came. And yes, that blessing must stand!"

³⁴When Esau heard his father's words, he let out a loud and bitter cry. "Oh my father, what about me? Bless me, too!" he begged.

³⁵But Isaac said, "Your brother was here, and he tricked me. He has taken away your blessing."

³⁶Esau exclaimed, "No wonder his name is Jacob, for now he has cheated me twice.* First he took my rights as the firstborn, and now he has stolen my blessing. Oh, haven't you saved even one blessing for me?"

³⁷Isaac said to Esau, "I have made Jacob your master and have declared that all his brothers will be his servants. I have guaranteed him an abundance of grain and wine—what is left for me to give you, my son?"

³⁸Esau pleaded, "But do you have only one blessing? Oh my father, bless me, too!" Then Esau broke down and wept.

³⁹Finally, his father, Isaac, said to him,

"You will live away from the richness of the earth,
and away from the dew of the heaven above.

⁴⁰ You will live by your sword,
and you will serve your brother.
But when you decide to break free,
you will shake his yoke from your neck."

⁴¹From that time on, Esau hated Jacob because their father had given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: "I will soon be mourning my father's death. Then I will kill my brother, Jacob."

⁴²But Rebekah heard about Esau's plans. So she sent for Jacob and told him, "Listen, Esau is consoling himself by plotting to kill you. ⁴³So listen carefully, my son. Get ready and flee to my brother, Laban, in Haran. ⁴⁴Stay there with him until your brother cools off. ⁴⁵When he calms down and forgets what you have done to him, I will send for you to come back. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

⁴⁶Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I'm sick and tired of these local Hittite women! I would rather die than see Jacob marry one of them."

27:36 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for "heel" and "deceiver."

MATTHEW 9:1-17

Jesus climbed into a boat and went back across the lake to his own town. ²Some people brought to him a paralyzed man on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Be encouraged, my child! Your sins are forgiven."

³But some of the teachers of religious law said to themselves, "That's blasphemy! Does he think he's God?"

⁴Jesus knew* what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you have such evil thoughts in your hearts? ⁵Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and walk'? ⁶So I will prove to you that the Son of Man* has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

⁷And the man jumped up and went home! ⁸Fear swept through the crowd as they saw this happen. And they praised God for sending a man with such great authority.*

⁹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. ¹¹But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?*"

¹²When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." ¹³Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.'* For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

¹⁴One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, "Why don't your disciples fast* like we do and the Pharisees do?"

¹⁵Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

¹⁶"Besides, who would patch old

clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

¹⁷"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved."

9:4 Some manuscripts read *saw*. **9:6** "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself. **9:8** Greek *for giving such authority to human beings*. **9:11** Greek *with tax collectors and sinners?* **9:13** Hos 6:6 (Greek version). **9:14** Some manuscripts read *fast often*.

PSALM 10:16-18

¹⁶ The LORD is king forever and ever!
The godless nations will vanish
from the land.

¹⁷ LORD, you know the hopes of the
helpless.

Surely you will hear their cries
and comfort them.

¹⁸ You will bring justice to the
orphans and the oppressed,
so mere people can no longer
terrify them.

PROVERBS 3:9-10

⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the best part of
everything you produce.

¹⁰ Then he will fill your barns with
grain,
and your vats will overflow with
good wine.

*Lord, when blind men begged for mercy, you gave it.
I'm asking that you have mercy on this nation. Help
us trust you more deeply and embrace your discipline.
Give us leaders who'll call us not just to a party
or platform but to you. Amen.*



GENESIS 28:1–29:35

So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and said, "You must not marry any of these Canaanite women. ²Instead, go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry one of your uncle Laban's daughters. ³May God Almighty* bless you and give you many children. And

may your descendants multiply and become many nations! ⁴May God pass on to you and your descendants* the blessings he promised to Abraham. May you own this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this land to Abraham."

⁵So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to stay with his

uncle Laban, his mother's brother, the son of Bethuel the Aramean.

⁶Esau knew that his father, Isaac, had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to find a wife, and that he had warned Jacob, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman."⁷ He also knew that Jacob had obeyed his parents and gone to Paddan-aram.⁸ It was now very clear to Esau that his father did not like the local Canaanite women.⁹ So Esau visited his uncle Ishmael's family and married one of Ishmael's daughters, in addition to the wives he already had. His new wife's name was Mahalath. She was the sister of Nebaioth and the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son.

¹⁰Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran.¹¹ At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp and stopped there for the night. Jacob found a stone to rest his head against and lay down to sleep.¹² As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from the earth up to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down the stairway.

¹³At the top of the stairway stood the LORD, and he said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants.¹⁴ Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants.¹⁵ What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."

¹⁶Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it!"¹⁷ But he was also afraid and said, "What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God, the very gateway to heaven!"

¹⁸The next morning Jacob got up

very early. He took the stone he had rested his head against, and he set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it.¹⁹ He named that place Bethel (which means "house of God"), although it was previously called Luz.

²⁰Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and clothing,²¹ and if I return safely to my father's home, then the LORD will certainly be my God.²² And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything he gives me."

^{29:1}Then Jacob hurried on, finally arriving in the land of the east.² He saw a well in the distance. Three flocks of sheep and goats lay in an open field beside it, waiting to be watered. But a heavy stone covered the mouth of the well.

³It was the custom there to wait for all the flocks to arrive before removing the stone and watering the animals. Afterward the stone would be placed back over the mouth of the well.⁴ Jacob went over to the shepherds and asked, "Where are you from, my friends?"

"We are from Haran," they answered.

⁵"Do you know a man there named Laban, the grandson of Nahor?" he asked.

"Yes, we do," they replied.

⁶"Is he doing well?" Jacob asked.

"Yes, he's well," they answered. "Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the flock now."

⁷Jacob said, "Look, it's still broad daylight—too early to round up the animals. Why don't you water the sheep and goats so they can get back out to pasture?"

⁸"We can't water the animals until all the flocks have arrived," they replied. "Then the shepherds move the stone from the mouth of the well, and we water all the sheep and goats."

⁹Jacob was still talking with them when Rachel arrived with her father's flock, for she was a shepherd.¹⁰ And

because Rachel was his cousin—the daughter of Laban, his mother’s brother—and because the sheep and goats belonged to his uncle Laban, Jacob went over to the well and moved the stone from its mouth and watered his uncle’s flock. ¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and he wept aloud. ¹²He explained to Rachel that he was her cousin on her father’s side—the son of her aunt Rebekah. So Rachel quickly ran and told her father, Laban.

¹³As soon as Laban heard that his nephew Jacob had arrived, he ran out to meet him. He embraced and kissed him and brought him home. When Jacob had told him his story, ¹⁴Laban exclaimed, “You really are my own flesh and blood!”

After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, ¹⁵Laban said to him, “You shouldn’t work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be.”

¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. ¹⁷There was no sparkle in Leah’s eyes,* but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face. ¹⁸Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, “I’ll work for you for seven years if you’ll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife.”

¹⁹“Agreed!” Laban replied. “I’d rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me.” ²⁰So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days.

²¹Finally, the time came for him to marry her. “I have fulfilled my agreement,” Jacob said to Laban. “Now give me my wife so I can sleep with her.”

²²So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast. ²³But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her. ²⁴(Laban had given Leah a servant, Zilpah, to be her maid.)

²⁵But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! “What have you done to me?” Jacob raged at Laban.

“I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?”

²⁶“It’s not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn,” Laban replied. ²⁷“But wait until the bridal week is over; then we’ll give you Rachel, too—provided you promise to work another seven years for me.”

²⁸So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. ²⁹(Laban gave Rachel a servant, Bilhah, to be her maid.) ³⁰So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and he loved her much more than Leah. He then stayed and worked for Laban the additional seven years.

³¹When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to have children, but Rachel could not conceive. ³²So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben,* for she said, “The LORD has noticed my misery, and now my husband will love me.”

³³She soon became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She named him Simeon,* for she said, “The LORD heard that I was unloved and has given me another son.”

³⁴Then she became pregnant a third time and gave birth to another son. He was named Levi,* for she said, “Surely this time my husband will feel affection for me, since I have given him three sons!”

³⁵Once again Leah became pregnant and gave birth to another son. She named him Judah,* for she said, “Now I will praise the LORD!” And then she stopped having children.

28:3 Hebrew *El-Shaddai*. **28:4** Hebrew *seed*; also in 28:13, 14. **29:17** Or *Leah had dull eyes*, or *Leah had soft eyes*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. **29:32** *Reuben* means “Look, a son!” It also sounds like the Hebrew for “He has seen my misery.” **29:33** *Simeon* probably means “one who hears.” **29:34** *Levi* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “being attached” or “feeling affection for.” **29:35** *Judah* is related to the Hebrew term for “praise.”

MATTHEW 9:18-38

As Jesus was saying this, the leader of a synagogue came and knelt before

him. “My daughter has just died,” he said, “but you can bring her back to life again if you just come and lay your hand on her.”

¹⁹So Jesus and his disciples got up and went with him. ²⁰Just then a woman who had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding came up behind him. She touched the fringe of his robe, ²¹for she thought, “If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.”

²²Jesus turned around, and when he saw her he said, “Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well.” And the woman was healed at that moment.

²³When Jesus arrived at the official’s home, he saw the noisy crowd and heard the funeral music. ²⁴“Get out!” he told them. “The girl isn’t dead; she’s only asleep.” But the crowd laughed at him. ²⁵After the crowd was put outside, however, Jesus went in and took the girl by the hand, and she stood up! ²⁶The report of this miracle swept through the entire countryside.

²⁷After Jesus left the girl’s home, two blind men followed along behind him, shouting, “Son of David, have mercy on us!”

²⁸They went right into the house where he was staying, and Jesus asked them, “Do you believe I can make you see?”

“Yes, Lord,” they told him, “we do.”

²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, “Because of your faith, it will happen.” ³⁰Then their eyes were opened, and they could see! Jesus sternly warned them, “Don’t tell anyone about this.” ³¹But instead, they went out and spread his fame all over the region.

³²When they left, a demon-possessed man who couldn’t speak was brought to Jesus. ³³So Jesus cast out the demon, and then the man began to speak. The crowds were amazed. “Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel!” they exclaimed.

³⁴But the Pharisees said, “He can cast out demons because he is empowered by the prince of demons.”

³⁵Jesus traveled through all the

towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. ³⁸So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”

PSALM 11:1-7

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- ¹ I trust in the LORD for protection.
So why do you say to me,
“Fly like a bird to the mountains
for safety!
- ² The wicked are stringing their bows
and fitting their arrows on the bowstrings.
They shoot from the shadows
at those whose hearts are right.
- ³ The foundations of law and order
have collapsed.
What can the righteous do?”
- ⁴ But the LORD is in his holy Temple;
the LORD still rules from heaven.
He watches everyone closely,
examining every person on earth.
- ⁵ The LORD examines both the righteous and the wicked.
He hates those who love violence.
- ⁶ He will rain down blazing coals
and burning sulfur on the wicked,
punishing them with scorching winds.
- ⁷ For the righteous LORD loves justice.
The virtuous will see his face.

PROVERBS 3:11-12

- ¹¹ My child, don’t reject the LORD’s discipline,

and don't be upset when he corrects you.

¹² For the LORD corrects those he loves,

just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.*

3:12 Greek version reads *loves, / and he punishes those he accepts as his children.* Compare Heb 12:6.

Lord, today I pray for our leaders to stand firm for what's right. To be all-in, to not give in to temptation or let corruption seep into their thoughts or actions. Guard their hearts, Lord. Give them integrity. Amen.



GENESIS 30:1–31:16

When Rachel saw that she wasn't having any children for Jacob, she became jealous of her sister. She pleaded with Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"

²Then Jacob became furious with Rachel. "Am I God?" he asked. "He's the one who has kept you from having children!"

³Then Rachel told him, "Take my maid, Bilhah, and sleep with her. She will bear children for me,* and through her I can have a family, too."

⁴So Rachel gave her servant, Bilhah, to Jacob as a wife, and he slept with her. ⁵Bilhah became pregnant and presented him with a son. ⁶Rachel named him Dan,* for she said, "God has vindicated me! He has heard my request and given me a son." ⁷Then Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. ⁸Rachel named him Naphtali,* for she said, "I have struggled hard with my sister, and I'm winning!"

⁹Meanwhile, Leah realized that she wasn't getting pregnant anymore, so she took her servant, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰Soon Zilpah presented him with a son. ¹¹Leah named him Gad,* for she said, "How fortunate I am!" ¹²Then Zilpah gave Jacob a second son. ¹³And Leah named him Asher,* for she said, "What joy is mine! Now the other women will celebrate with me."

¹⁴One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes growing in a field and brought them to his mother, Leah. Rachel begged

Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

¹⁵But Leah angrily replied, "Wasn't it enough that you stole my husband? Now will you steal my son's mandrakes, too?"

Rachel answered, "I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight if you give me some of the mandrakes."

¹⁶So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must come and sleep with me tonight!" she said. "I have paid for you with some mandrakes that my son found." So that night he slept with Leah. ¹⁷And God answered Leah's prayers. She became pregnant again and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. ¹⁸She named him Issachar,* for she said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband as a wife." ¹⁹Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. ²⁰She named him Zebulun,* for she said, "God has given me a good reward. Now my husband will treat me with respect, for I have given him six sons." ²¹Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

²²Then God remembered Rachel's plight and answered her prayers by enabling her to have children. ²³She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. "God has removed my disgrace," she said. ²⁴And she named him Joseph,* for she said, "May the LORD add yet another son to my family."

²⁵Soon after Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Please release me so I can go home

to my own country. ²⁶Let me take my wives and children, for I have earned them by serving you, and let me be on my way. You certainly know how hard I have worked for you.”

²⁷“Please listen to me,” Laban replied. “I have become wealthy, for* the LORD has blessed me because of you. ²⁸Tell me how much I owe you. Whatever it is, I’ll pay it.”

²⁹Jacob replied, “You know how hard I’ve worked for you, and how your flocks and herds have grown under my care. ³⁰You had little indeed before I came, but your wealth has increased enormously. The LORD has blessed you through everything I’ve done. But now, what about me? When can I start providing for my own family?”

³¹“What wages do you want?” Laban asked again.

Jacob replied, “Don’t give me anything. Just do this one thing, and I’ll continue to tend and watch over your flocks. ³²Let me inspect your flocks today and remove all the sheep and goats that are speckled or spotted, along with all the black sheep. Give these to me as my wages. ³³In the future, when you check on the animals you have given me as my wages, you’ll see that I have been honest. If you find in my flock any goats without speckles or spots, or any sheep that are not black, you will know that I have stolen them from you.”

³⁴“All right,” Laban replied. “It will be as you say.” ³⁵But that very day Laban went out and removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted or had white patches, and all the black sheep. He placed them in the care of his own sons, ³⁶who took them a three-days’ journey from where Jacob was. Meanwhile, Jacob stayed and cared for the rest of Laban’s flock.

³⁷Then Jacob took some fresh branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled off strips of bark, making white streaks on them. ³⁸Then he placed these peeled branches in the watering troughs

where the flocks came to drink, for that was where they mated. ³⁹And when they mated in front of the white-streaked branches, they gave birth to young that were streaked, speckled, and spotted. ⁴⁰Jacob separated those lambs from Laban’s flock. And at mating time he turned the flock to face Laban’s animals that were streaked or black. This is how he built his own flock instead of increasing Laban’s.

⁴¹Whenever the stronger females were ready to mate, Jacob would place the peeled branches in the watering troughs in front of them. Then they would mate in front of the branches. ⁴²But he didn’t do this with the weaker ones, so the weaker lambs belonged to Laban, and the stronger ones were Jacob’s. ⁴³As a result, Jacob became very wealthy, with large flocks of sheep and goats, female and male servants, and many camels and donkeys.

^{31:1}But Jacob soon learned that Laban’s sons were grumbling about him. “Jacob has robbed our father of everything!” they said. “He has gained all his wealth at our father’s expense.” ²And Jacob began to notice a change in Laban’s attitude toward him.

³Then the LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your father and grandfather and to your relatives there, and I will be with you.”

⁴So Jacob called Rachel and Leah out to the field where he was watching his flock. ⁵He said to them, “I have noticed that your father’s attitude toward me has changed. But the God of my father has been with me. ⁶You know how hard I have worked for your father, ⁷but he has cheated me, changing my wages ten times. But God has not allowed him to do me any harm. ⁸For if he said, ‘The speckled animals will be your wages,’ the whole flock began to produce speckled young. And when he changed his mind and said, ‘The striped animals will be your wages,’ then the whole flock produced striped young. ⁹In this way, God has taken your father’s animals and given them to me.

¹⁰“One time during the mating season, I had a dream and saw that the male goats mating with the females were streaked, speckled, and spotted. ¹¹Then in my dream, the angel of God said to me, ‘Jacob!’ And I replied, ‘Yes, here I am.’

¹²“The angel said, ‘Look up, and you will see that only the streaked, speckled, and spotted males are mating with the females of your flock. For I have seen how Laban has treated you. ¹³I am the God who appeared to you at Bethel,* the place where you anointed the pillar of stone and made your vow to me. Now get ready and leave this country and return to the land of your birth.’”

¹⁴Rachel and Leah responded, “That’s fine with us! We won’t inherit any of our father’s wealth anyway. ¹⁵He has reduced our rights to those of foreign women. And after he sold us, he wasted the money you paid him for us. ¹⁶All the wealth God has given you from our father legally belongs to us and our children. So go ahead and do whatever God has told you.”

30:3 Hebrew *bear children on my knees.*

30:6 *Dan* means “he judged” or “he vindicated.”

30:8 *Naphthali* means “my struggle.” **30:11** *Gad* means “good fortune.” **30:13** *Asher* means “happy.”

30:18 *Issachar* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “reward.” **30:20** *Zebulun* probably means “honor.”

30:24 *Joseph* means “may he add.” **30:27** *Or I have learned by divination that.* **31:13** As in Greek version and an Aramaic Targum; Hebrew reads *the God of Bethel.*

MATTHEW 10:1-23

Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil* spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness. ²Here are the names of the twelve apostles:

first, Simon (also called Peter),
then Andrew (Peter’s brother),
James (son of Zebedee),
John (James’s brother),

³ Philip,
Bartholomew,
Thomas,

Matthew (the tax collector),
James (son of Alphaeus),
Thaddaeus,*

⁴ Simon (the zealot*),

Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

⁵Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: “Don’t go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, ⁶but only to the people of Israel—God’s lost sheep. ⁷Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near.* ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!

⁹“Don’t take any money in your money belts—no gold, silver, or even copper coins. ¹⁰Don’t carry a traveler’s bag with a change of clothes and sandals or even a walking stick. Don’t hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve to be fed.

¹¹“Whenever you enter a city or village, search for a worthy person and stay in his home until you leave town. ¹²When you enter the home, give it your blessing. ¹³If it turns out to be a worthy home, let your blessing stand; if it is not, take back the blessing. ¹⁴If any household or town refuses to welcome you or listen to your message, shake its dust from your feet as you leave. ¹⁵I tell you the truth, the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be better off than such a town on the judgment day.

¹⁶“Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. ¹⁷But beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the synagogues. ¹⁸You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me.* ¹⁹When you are arrested, don’t worry about how to respond or what to say. God will give you the right words at the right time. ²⁰For it is not you who will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

²¹“A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his own child, and children will rebel against their parents and cause them to be

killed. ²²And all nations will hate you because you are my followers.* But everyone who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When you are persecuted in one town, flee to the next. I tell you the truth, the Son of Man* will return before you have reached all the towns of Israel.”

10:1 Greek *unclean*. **10:3** Other manuscripts read *Lebbaeus*; still others read *Lebbaeus who is called Thaddaeus*. **10:4** Greek *the Cananean*, an Aramaic term for Jewish nationalists. **10:7** Or *has come*, or *is coming soon*. **10:18** Or *But this will be your testimony against the rulers and other unbelievers*. **10:22** Greek *on account of my name*. **10:23** “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

PSALM 12:1-8

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by an eight-stringed instrument.**

- ¹ Help, O LORD, for the godly are fast disappearing!
The faithful have vanished from the earth!
- ² Neighbors lie to each other, speaking with flattering lips and deceitful hearts.
- ³ May the LORD cut off their flattering lips and silence their boastful tongues.
- ⁴ They say, “We will lie to our hearts’ content.
Our lips are our own—who can stop us?”

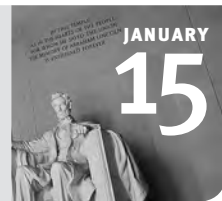
- ⁵ The LORD replies, “I have seen violence done to the helpless,
and I have heard the groans of the poor.
Now I will rise up to rescue them,
as they have longed for me to do.”
- ⁶ The LORD’s promises are pure,
like silver refined in a furnace,
purified seven times over.
- ⁷ Therefore, LORD, we know you will protect the oppressed,
preserving them forever from this lying generation,
- ⁸ even though the wicked strut about,
and evil is praised throughout the land.

12:TITLE Hebrew *according to the sheminit*.

PROVERBS 3:13-15

- ¹³ Joyful is the person who finds wisdom,
the one who gains understanding.
- ¹⁴ For wisdom is more profitable than silver,
and her wages are better than gold.
- ¹⁵ Wisdom is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.

Lord, David asked that you refresh his hope and bring back the “sparkle” to his eyes (Psalm 13:3). I want that for our leaders, Lord. Renew their strength and sense of purpose. Help them find joy in serving those who elected them to office. Amen.



GENESIS 31:17–32:12

So Jacob put his wives and children on camels, ¹⁸and he drove all his livestock in front of him. He packed all the belongings he had acquired in Paddan-aram and set out for the land of Canaan, where his father, Isaac, lived. ¹⁹At the time they left, Laban was some distance away, shearing his sheep. Rachel stole her father’s household idols and took them with

her. ²⁰Jacob outwitted Laban the Aramean, for they set out secretly and never told Laban they were leaving. ²¹So Jacob took all his possessions with him and crossed the Euphrates River,* heading for the hill country of Gilead. ²²Three days later, Laban was told that Jacob had fled. ²³So he gathered a group of his relatives and set out in hot pursuit. He caught up with Jacob

seven days later in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴But the previous night God had appeared to Laban the Aramean in a dream and told him, “I’m warning you—leave Jacob alone!”

²⁵Laban caught up with Jacob as he was camped in the hill country of Gilead, and he set up his camp not far from Jacob’s. ²⁶“What do you mean by deceiving me like this?” Laban demanded. “How dare you drag my daughters away like prisoners of war? ²⁷Why did you slip away secretly? Why did you deceive me? And why didn’t you say you wanted to leave? I would have given you a farewell feast, with singing and music, accompanied by tambourines and harps. ²⁸Why didn’t you let me kiss my daughters and grandchildren and tell them good-bye? You have acted very foolishly!

²⁹I could destroy you, but the God of your father appeared to me last night and warned me, ‘Leave Jacob alone!’ ³⁰I can understand your feeling that you must go, and your intense longing for your father’s home. But why have you stolen my gods?”

³¹“I rushed away because I was afraid,” Jacob answered. “I thought you would take your daughters from me by force. ³²But as for your gods, see if you can find them, and let the person who has taken them die! And if you find anything else that belongs to you, identify it before all these relatives of ours, and I will give it back!” But Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the household idols.

³³Laban went first into Jacob’s tent to search there, then into Leah’s, and then the tents of the two servant wives—but he found nothing. Finally, he went into Rachel’s tent. ³⁴But Rachel had taken the household idols and hidden them in her camel saddle, and now she was sitting on them. When Laban had thoroughly searched her tent without finding them, ³⁵she said to her father, “Please, sir, forgive me if I don’t get up for you. I’m having my monthly period.” So Laban continued his search, but he could not find the household idols.

³⁶Then Jacob became very angry, and he challenged Laban. “What’s my crime?” he demanded. “What have I done wrong to make you chase after me as though I were a criminal? ³⁷You have rummaged through everything I own. Now show me what you found that belongs to you! Set it out here in front of us, before our relatives, for all to see. Let them judge between us!

³⁸“For twenty years I have been with you, caring for your flocks. In all that time your sheep and goats never miscarried. In all those years I never used a single ram of yours for food. ³⁹If any were attacked and killed by wild animals, I never showed you the carcass and asked you to reduce the count of your flock. No, I took the loss myself! You made me pay for every stolen animal, whether it was taken in broad daylight or in the dark of night.

⁴⁰“I worked for you through the scorching heat of the day and through cold and sleepless nights. ⁴¹Yes, for twenty years I slaved in your house! I worked for fourteen years earning your two daughters, and then six more years for your flock. And you changed my wages ten times! ⁴²In fact, if the God of my father had not been on my side—the God of Abraham and the fearsome God of Isaac*—you would have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen your abuse and my hard work. That is why he appeared to you last night and rebuked you!”

⁴³Then Laban replied to Jacob, “These women are my daughters, these children are my grandchildren, and these flocks are my flocks—in fact, everything you see is mine. But what can I do now about my daughters and their children? ⁴⁴So come, let’s make a covenant, you and I, and it will be a witness to our commitment.”

⁴⁵So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a monument. ⁴⁶Then he told his family members, “Gather some stones.” So they gathered stones and piled them in a heap. Then Jacob and Laban sat down beside the pile of stones to eat a covenant meal. ⁴⁷To commemorate the event, Laban called

the place Jegar-sahadutha (which means “witness pile” in Aramaic), and Jacob called it Galeed (which means “witness pile” in Hebrew).

⁴⁸Then Laban declared, “This pile of stones will stand as a witness to remind us of the covenant we have made today.” This explains why it was called Galeed—“Witness Pile.” ⁴⁹But it was also called Mizpah (which means “watchtower”), for Laban said, “May the LORD keep watch between us to make sure that we keep this covenant when we are out of each other’s sight. ⁵⁰If you mistreat my daughters or if you marry other wives, God will see it even if no one else does. He is a witness to this covenant between us.

⁵¹“See this pile of stones,” Laban continued, “and see this monument I have set between us. ⁵²They stand between us as witnesses of our vows. I will never pass this pile of stones to harm you, and you must never pass these stones or this monument to harm me. ⁵³I call on the God of our ancestors—the God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of my grandfather Nahor—to serve as a judge between us.”

So Jacob took an oath before the fearsome God of his father, Isaac,* to respect the boundary line. ⁵⁴Then Jacob offered a sacrifice to God there on the mountain and invited everyone to a covenant feast. After they had eaten, they spent the night on the mountain.

⁵⁵*Laban got up early the next morning, and he kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

^{32:1*} As Jacob started on his way again, angels of God came to meet him. ²When Jacob saw them, he exclaimed, “This is God’s camp!” So he named the place Mahanaim.*

³Then Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother, Esau, who was living in the region of Seir in the land of Edom. ⁴He told them, “Give this message to my master Esau: ‘Humble greetings from your servant Jacob. Until now I have been living with Uncle Laban, ⁵and now I own cattle, donkeys,

flocks of sheep and goats, and many servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to inform my lord of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to me.”

⁶After delivering the message, the messengers returned to Jacob and reported, “We met your brother, Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you—with an army of 400 men!” ⁷Jacob was terrified at the news. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups. ⁸He thought, “If Esau meets one group and attacks it, perhaps the other group can escape.”

⁹Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac—O LORD, you told me, ‘Return to your own land and to your relatives.’ And you promised me, ‘I will treat you kindly.’ ¹⁰I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness you have shown to me, your servant. When I left home and crossed the Jordan River, I owned nothing except a walking stick. Now my household fills two large camps! ¹¹O LORD, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and children. ¹²But you promised me, ‘I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore—too many to count.’”

31:21 Hebrew the river. 31:42 Or and the Fear of Isaac. 31:53 Or the Fear of his father, Isaac. 31:55 Verse 31:55 is numbered 32:1 in Hebrew text. 32:1 Verses 32:1-32 are numbered 32:2-33 in Hebrew text. 32:2 Mahanaim means “two camps.”

MATTHEW 10:24–11:6

“Students* are not greater than their teacher, and slaves are not greater than their master. ²⁵Students are to be like their teacher, and slaves are to be like their master. And since I, the master of the household, have been called the prince of demons,* the members of my household will be called by even worse names!

²⁶“But don’t be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming

when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. ²⁷What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!

²⁸“Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.* ²⁹What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin*? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

³²“Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴“Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ ‘I have come to set a man against
his father,
a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her
mother-in-law.

³⁶ Your enemies will be right in
your own household!*

³⁷“If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁸If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁹If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.

⁴⁰“Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone who receives me receives the Father who sent me. ⁴¹If you receive a prophet as one who speaks for God,* you will be given the same reward as a prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their righteousness, you will be given

a reward like theirs. ⁴²And if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded.”

^{11:1}When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to his twelve disciples, he went out to teach and preach in towns throughout the region.

²John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, ³“Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting,* or should we keep looking for someone else?”

⁴Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen—⁵the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor. ⁶And tell him, ‘God blesses those who do not turn away because of me.*”

10:24 Or *Disciples*. **10:25** Greek *Beelzeboul*; other manuscripts read *Beezeboul*; Latin version reads *Beelzebub*. **10:28** Greek *Gehenna*. **10:29** Greek *one assarion* [i.e., one “as,” a Roman coin equal to 1/16 of a denarius]. **10:35-36** Mic 7:6. **10:41** Greek *receive a prophet in the name of a prophet*. **11:3** Greek *Are you the one who is coming?* **11:6** Or *who are not offended by me*.

PSALM 13:1-6

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- 1 O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever?
How long will you look the other way?
- 2 How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul,
with sorrow in my heart every day?
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?
- 3 Turn and answer me, O LORD my God!
Restore the sparkle to my eyes,
or I will die.
- 4 Don’t let my enemies gloat, saying,
“We have defeated him!”
Don’t let them rejoice at my downfall.
- 5 But I trust in your unfailing love.
I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

⁶ I will sing to the LORD
because he is good to me.

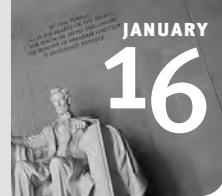
¹⁷ She will guide you down delightful
paths;
all her ways are satisfying.

PROVERBS 3:16-18

¹⁶ She [Wisdom] offers you long life
in her right hand,
and riches and honor in her left.

¹⁸ Wisdom is a tree of life to those
who embrace her;
happy are those who hold her
tightly.

Lord, Jesus thanked you for revealing things to the childlike that clever, calculating people miss. I pray today that you'll help Senators and members of Congress be childlike in the best way: curious, open, and fully depending on their Father. Amen.



GENESIS 32:13-34:31

Jacob stayed where he was for the night. Then he selected these gifts from his possessions to present to his brother, Esau: ¹⁴200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, ¹⁵30 female camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. ¹⁶He divided these animals into herds and assigned each to different servants. Then he told his servants, “Go ahead of me with the animals, but keep some distance between the herds.”

wives, and his eleven sons and crossed the Jabbok River with them. ²³After taking them to the other side, he sent over all his possessions.

¹⁷He gave these instructions to the men leading the first group: “When my brother, Esau, meets you, he will ask, ‘Whose servants are you? Where are you going? Who owns these animals?’ ¹⁸You must reply, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob, but they are a gift for his master Esau. Look, he is coming right behind us.’”

²⁴This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. ²⁵When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob’s hip and wrenched it out of its socket. ²⁶Then the man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!”

¹⁹Jacob gave the same instructions to the second and third herdsmen and to all who followed behind the herds: “You must say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. ²⁰And be sure to say, ‘Look, your servant Jacob is right behind us.’”

But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

Jacob thought, “I will try to appease him by sending gifts ahead of me. When I see him in person, perhaps he will be friendly to me.” ²¹So the gifts were sent on ahead, while Jacob himself spent that night in the camp.

²⁷“What is your name?” the man asked.

He replied, “Jacob.”

²⁸“Your name will no longer be Jacob,” the man told him. “From now on you will be called Israel,* because you have fought with God and with men and have won.”

²²During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two servant

²⁹“Please tell me your name,” Jacob said.

“Why do you want to know my name?” the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there.

³⁰Jacob named the place Peniel (which means “face of God”), for he said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared.” ³¹The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel,* and he was limping because of the injury to his hip. ³²(Even today the people of Israel don’t eat the tendon near the hip socket because of what happened that night when the man strained the tendon of Jacob’s hip.)

^{33:1}Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and his two servant wives. ²He put the servant wives and their children at the front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. ³Then Jacob went on ahead. As he approached his brother, he bowed to the ground seven times before him. ⁴Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept.

⁵Then Esau looked at the women and children and asked, "Who are these people with you?"

"These are the children God has graciously given to me, your servant," Jacob replied. ⁶Then the servant wives came forward with their children and bowed before him. ⁷Next came Leah with her children, and they bowed before him. Finally, Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed before him.

⁸"And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?" Esau asked.

Jacob replied, "They are a gift, my lord, to ensure your friendship."

⁹"My brother, I have plenty," Esau answered. "Keep what you have for yourself."

¹⁰But Jacob insisted, "No, if I have found favor with you, please accept this gift from me. And what a relief to see your friendly smile. It is like seeing the face of God! ¹¹Please take this gift I have brought you, for God has been very gracious to me. I have more than enough." And because Jacob insisted, Esau finally accepted the gift.

¹²"Well," Esau said, "let's be going. I will lead the way."

¹³But Jacob replied, "You can see, my lord, that some of the children are very young, and the flocks and herds have their young, too. If they are driven too hard, even for one day, all the animals could die. ¹⁴Please, my lord, go ahead of your servant. We will follow slowly, at a pace that is comfortable for the livestock and the children. I will meet you at Seir."

¹⁵"All right," Esau said, "but at least

let me assign some of my men to guide and protect you."

Jacob responded, "That's not necessary. It's enough that you've received me warmly, my lord!"

¹⁶So Esau turned around and started back to Seir that same day. ¹⁷Jacob, on the other hand, traveled on to Succoth. There he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was named Succoth (which means "shelters").

¹⁸Later, having traveled all the way from Paddan-aram, Jacob arrived safely at the town of Shechem, in the land of Canaan. There he set up camp outside the town. ¹⁹Jacob bought the plot of land where he camped from the family of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for 100 pieces of silver.* ²⁰And there he built an altar and named it El-Elohe-Israel.*

^{34:1}One day Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went to visit some of the young women who lived in the area. ²But when the local prince, Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, saw Dinah, he seized her and raped her. ³But then he fell in love with her, and he tried to win her affection with tender words. ⁴He said to his father, Hamor, "Get me this young girl. I want to marry her."

⁵Soon Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter, Dinah. But since his sons were out in the fields herding his livestock, he said nothing until they returned. ⁶Hamor, Shechem's father, came to discuss the matter with Jacob. ⁷Meanwhile, Jacob's sons had come in from the field as soon as they heard what had happened. They were shocked and furious that their sister had been raped. Shechem had done a disgraceful thing against Jacob's family,* something that should never be done.

⁸Hamor tried to speak with Jacob and his sons. "My son Shechem is truly in love with your daughter," he said. "Please let him marry her. ⁹In fact, let's arrange other marriages, too. You give us your daughters for our

sons, and we will give you our daughters for your sons.¹⁰ And you may live among us; the land is open to you! Settle here and trade with us. And feel free to buy property in the area.”

¹¹Then Shechem himself spoke to Dinah’s father and brothers. “Please be kind to me, and let me marry her,” he begged. “I will give you whatever you ask.¹² No matter what dowry or gift you demand, I will gladly pay it—just give me the girl as my wife.”

¹³But since Shechem had defiled their sister, Dinah, Jacob’s sons responded deceitfully to Shechem and his father, Hamor.¹⁴ They said to them, “We couldn’t possibly allow this, because you’re not circumcised. It would be a disgrace for our sister to marry a man like you!¹⁵ But here is a solution. If every man among you will be circumcised like we are,¹⁶ then we will give you our daughters, and we’ll take your daughters for ourselves. We will live among you and become one people.¹⁷ But if you don’t agree to be circumcised, we will take her and be on our way.”

¹⁸Hamor and his son Shechem agreed to their proposal.¹⁹ Shechem wasted no time in acting on this request, for he wanted Jacob’s daughter desperately. Shechem was a highly respected member of his family,²⁰ and he went with his father, Hamor, to present this proposal to the leaders at the town gate.

²¹“These men are our friends,” they said. “Let’s invite them to live here among us and trade freely. Look, the land is large enough to hold them. We can take their daughters as wives and let them marry ours.²² But they will consider staying here and becoming one people with us only if all of our men are circumcised, just as they are.²³ But if we do this, all their livestock and possessions will eventually be ours. Come, let’s agree to their terms and let them settle here among us.”

²⁴So all the men in the town council agreed with Hamor and Shechem, and every male in the town was circumcised.²⁵ But three days later, when

their wounds were still sore, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, who were Dinah’s full brothers, took their swords and entered the town without opposition. Then they slaughtered every male there,²⁶ including Hamor and his son Shechem. They killed them with their swords, then took Dinah from Shechem’s house and returned to their camp.

²⁷Meanwhile, the rest of Jacob’s sons arrived. Finding the men slaughtered, they plundered the town because their sister had been defiled there.²⁸ They seized all the flocks and herds and donkeys—everything they could lay their hands on, both inside the town and outside in the fields.²⁹ They looted all their wealth and plundered their houses. They also took all their little children and wives and led them away as captives.

³⁰Afterward Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have ruined me! You’ve made me stink among all the people of this land—among all the Canaanites and Perizzites. We are so few that they will join forces and crush us. I will be ruined, and my entire household will be wiped out!”

³¹“But why should we let him treat our sister like a prostitute?” they retorted angrily.

32:28 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for “heel” and “deceiver.” *Israel* means “God fights.”

32:31 Hebrew *Penuel*, a variant spelling of Peniel.

33:19 Hebrew *100 kesitahs*; the value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known. **33:20** *El-Elohe-Israel* means “God, the God of Israel.” **34:7** Hebrew *a disgraceful thing in Israel*.

MATTHEW 11:7-30

As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to the crowds. “What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? ⁸Or were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No, people with expensive clothes live in palaces. ⁹Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. ¹⁰John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say,

'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way before you.*'

¹¹"I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is! ¹²And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing,* and violent people are attacking it. ¹³For before John came, all the prophets and the law of Moses looked forward to this present time. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept what I say, he is Elijah, the one the prophets said would come.* ¹⁵Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

¹⁶"To what can I compare this generation? It is like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends,

¹⁷ 'We played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn't mourn.'

¹⁸For John didn't spend his time eating and drinking, and you say, 'He's possessed by a demon.' ¹⁹The Son of Man,* on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!' But wisdom is shown to be right by its results."

²⁰Then Jesus began to denounce the towns where he had done so many of his miracles, because they hadn't repented of their sins and turned to God. ²¹"What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. ²²I tell you, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than you.

²³"And you people of Capernaum,

will you be honored in heaven? No, you will go down to the place of the dead.* For if the miracles I did for you had been done in wicked Sodom, it would still be here today. ²⁴I tell you, even Sodom will be better off on judgment day than you."

²⁵At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. ²⁶Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!

²⁷"My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

²⁸Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

11:10 Mal 3:1. 11:12 Or the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered from violence. 11:14 See Mal 4:5. 11:19 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself. 11:23 Greek to Hades.

PSALM 14:1-7

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

¹ Only fools say in their hearts,
"There is no God."

They are corrupt, and their actions
are evil;
not one of them does good!

² The LORD looks down from heaven
on the entire human race;
he looks to see if anyone is truly
wise,
if anyone seeks God.

³ But no, all have turned away;
all have become corrupt.*
No one does good,
not a single one!

⁴ Will those who do evil never learn?
They eat up my people like
bread

and wouldn't think of praying to the LORD.

⁵ Terror will grip them, for God is with those who obey him.

⁶ The wicked frustrate the plans of the oppressed, but the LORD will protect his people.

⁷ Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue Israel? When the LORD restores his people,

Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will rejoice.

14:3 Greek version reads *have become useless*. Compare Rom 3:12.

PROVERBS 3:19-20

¹⁹ By wisdom the LORD founded the earth; by understanding he created the heavens.

²⁰ By his knowledge the deep fountains of the earth burst forth, and the dew settles beneath the night sky.

Lord, like those Pharisees, we seem so easily offended these days, so fast to find fault. Help our leaders—help all of us—to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and to taste our words before spitting them out. Amen.



GENESIS 35:1-36:43

Then God said to Jacob, “Get ready and move to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother, Esau.”

²So Jacob told everyone in his household, “Get rid of all your pagan idols, purify yourselves, and put on clean clothing. ³We are now going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to the God who answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has been with me wherever I have gone.”

⁴So they gave Jacob all their pagan idols and earrings, and he buried them under the great tree near Shechem. ⁵As they set out, a terror from God spread over the people in all the towns of that area, so no one attacked Jacob's family.

⁶Eventually, Jacob and his household arrived at Luz (also called Bethel) in Canaan. ⁷Jacob built an altar there and named the place El-bethel (which means “God of Bethel”), because God had appeared to him there when he was fleeing from his brother, Esau.

⁸Soon after this, Rebekah's old nurse, Deborah, died. She was buried

beneath the oak tree in the valley below Bethel. Ever since, the tree has been called Allon-bacuth (which means “oak of weeping”).

⁹Now that Jacob had returned from Paddan-aram, God appeared to him again at Bethel. God blessed him, ¹⁰saying, “Your name is Jacob, but you will not be called Jacob any longer. From now on your name will be Israel.”* So God renamed him Israel.

¹¹Then God said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Be fruitful and multiply. You will become a great nation, even many nations. Kings will be among your descendants! ¹²And I will give you the land I once gave to Abraham and Isaac. Yes, I will give it to you and your descendants after you.” ¹³Then God went up from the place where he had spoken to Jacob.

¹⁴Jacob set up a stone pillar to mark the place where God had spoken to him. Then he poured wine over it as an offering to God and anointed the pillar with olive oil. ¹⁵And Jacob named the place Bethel (which means “house of God”), because God had spoken to him there.

¹⁶Leaving Bethel, Jacob and his clan

moved on toward Ephrath. But Rachel went into labor while they were still some distance away. Her labor pains were intense. ¹⁷After a very hard delivery, the midwife finally exclaimed, “Don’t be afraid—you have another son!” ¹⁸Rachel was about to die, but with her last breath she named the baby Ben-oni (which means “son of my sorrow”). The baby’s father, however, called him Benjamin (which means “son of my right hand”). ¹⁹So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰Jacob set up a stone monument over Rachel’s grave, and it can be seen there to this day.

²¹Then Jacob* traveled on and camped beyond Migdal-eder. ²²While he was living there, Reuben had intercourse with Bilhah, his father’s concubine, and Jacob soon heard about it.

These are the names of the twelve sons of Jacob:

²³The sons of Leah were Reuben (Jacob’s oldest son), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

²⁴The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵The sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s servant, were Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶The sons of Zilpah, Leah’s servant, were Gad and Asher.

These are the names of the sons who were born to Jacob at Paddan-aram.

²⁷So Jacob returned to his father, Isaac, in Mamre, which is near Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had both lived as foreigners. ²⁸Isaac lived for 180 years. ²⁹Then he breathed his last and died at a ripe old age, joining his ancestors in death. And his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

^{36:1}This is the account of the descendants of Esau (also known as Edom). ²Esau married two young women from Canaan: Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite; and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite. ³He also married his cousin Basemath, who was

the daughter of Ishmael and the sister of Nebaioth. ⁴Adah gave birth to a son named Eliphaz for Esau. Basemath gave birth to a son named Reuel. ⁵Oholibamah gave birth to sons named Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. All these sons were born to Esau in the land of Canaan.

⁶Esau took his wives, his children, and his entire household, along with his livestock and cattle—all the wealth he had acquired in the land of Canaan—and moved away from his brother, Jacob. ⁷There was not enough land to support them both because of all the livestock and possessions they had acquired. ⁸So Esau (also known as Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir.

⁹This is the account of Esau’s descendants, the Edomites, who lived in the hill country of Seir.

¹⁰These are the names of Esau’s sons: Eliphaz, the son of Esau’s wife Adah; and Reuel, the son of Esau’s wife Basemath.

¹¹The descendants of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. ¹²Timna, the concubine of Esau’s son Eliphaz, gave birth to a son named Amalek. These are the descendants of Esau’s wife Adah.

¹³The descendants of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These are the descendants of Esau’s wife Basemath.

¹⁴Esau also had sons through Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon. Their names were Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

¹⁵These are the descendants of Esau who became the leaders of various clans:

The descendants of Esau’s oldest son, Eliphaz, became the leaders of the clans of Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶Korah, Gatam, and Amalek. These are the clan leaders in the land of Edom who descended from Eliphaz. All these

were descendants of Esau's wife Adah.

- ¹⁷The descendants of Esau's son Reuel became the leaders of the clans of Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These are the clan leaders in the land of Edom who descended from Reuel. All these were descendants of Esau's wife Basemath.
- ¹⁸The descendants of Esau and his wife Oholibamah became the leaders of the clans of Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the clan leaders who descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.
- ¹⁹These are the clans descended from Esau (also known as Edom), identified by their clan leaders.
- ²⁰These are the names of the tribes that descended from Seir the Horite. They lived in the land of Edom: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the Horite clan leaders, the descendants of Seir, who lived in the land of Edom.
- ²²The descendants of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister was named Timna.
- ²³The descendants of Shobal were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.
- ²⁴The descendants of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah. (This is the Anah who discovered the hot springs in the wilderness while he was grazing his father's donkeys.)
- ²⁵The descendants of Anah were his son, Dishon, and his daughter, Oholibamah.
- ²⁶The descendants of Dishon* were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.
- ²⁷The descendants of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.
- ²⁸The descendants of Dishan were Uz and Aran.
- ²⁹So these were the leaders of the Horite clans: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ³⁰Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. The Horite clans are named after their

clan leaders, who lived in the land of Seir.

- ³¹These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled over the Israelites*:
- ³²Bela son of Beor, who ruled in Edom from his city of Dinhabah.
- ³³When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king in his place.
- ³⁴When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites became king in his place.
- ³⁵When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king in his place and ruled from the city of Avith. He was the one who defeated the Midianites in the land of Moab.
- ³⁶When Hadad died, Samlah from the city of Masrekah became king in his place.
- ³⁷When Samlah died, Shaul from the city of Rehoboth-on-the-River became king in his place.
- ³⁸When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Acbor became king in his place.
- ³⁹When Baal-hanan son of Acbor died, Hadad* became king in his place and ruled from the city of Pau. His wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Me-zahab.
- ⁴⁰These are the names of the leaders of the clans descended from Esau, who lived in the places named for them: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ⁴¹Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ⁴²Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ⁴³Magdiel, and Iram. These are the leaders of the clans of Edom, listed according to their settlements in the land they occupied. They all descended from Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites.

35:10 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for "heel" and "deceiver." *Israel* means "God fights."

35:21 Hebrew *Israel*; also in 35:22a. The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation. **36:26** Hebrew *Dishan*, a variant spelling of Dishon; compare 36:21, 28. **36:31** Or *before an Israelite king ruled over them*. **36:39** As in some Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Syriac version (see also 1 Chr 1:50); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Hadar*.

MATTHEW 12:1-21

At about that time Jesus was walking through some grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, so they began breaking off some heads of grain and eating them. ²But some Pharisees saw them do it and protested, “Look, your disciples are breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath.”

³Jesus said to them, “Haven’t you read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He went into the house of God, and he and his companions broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests are allowed to eat. ⁵And haven’t you read in the law of Moses that the priests on duty in the Temple may work on the Sabbath? ⁶I tell you, there is one here who is even greater than the Temple! ⁷But you would not have condemned my innocent disciples if you knew the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’” ⁸For the Son of Man* is Lord, even over the Sabbath!”

⁹Then Jesus went over to their synagogue, ¹⁰where he noticed a man with a deformed hand. The Pharisees asked Jesus, “Does the law permit a person to work by healing on the Sabbath?” (They were hoping he would say yes, so they could bring charges against him.)

¹¹And he answered, “If you had a sheep that fell into a well on the Sabbath, wouldn’t you work to pull it out? Of course you would. ¹²And how much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Yes, the law permits a person to do good on the Sabbath.”

¹³Then he said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” So the man held out his hand, and it was restored, just like the other one! ¹⁴Then the Pharisees called a meeting to plot how to kill Jesus.

¹⁵But Jesus knew what they were planning. So he left that area, and many people followed him. He healed all the sick among them, ¹⁶but he

warned them not to reveal who he was. ¹⁷This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning him:

¹⁸ “Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen.

He is my Beloved, who pleases me.

I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

¹⁹ He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public.

²⁰ He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. Finally he will cause justice to be victorious.

²¹ And his name will be the hope of all the world.”*

12:7 Hos 6:6 (Greek version). **12:8** “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself. **12:18-21** Isa 42:1-4 (Greek version for 42:4).

PSALM 15:1-5

A psalm of David.

¹ Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD?

Who may enter your presence on your holy hill?

² Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts.

³ Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends.

⁴ Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts.

⁵ Those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent.

Such people will stand firm forever.

PROVERBS 3:21-26

²¹ My child, don’t lose sight of common sense and discernment.

Hang on to them,

²² for they will refresh your soul.

They are like jewels on a necklace.

²³ They keep you safe on your way, and your feet will not stumble.

²⁴ You can go to bed without fear; you will lie down and sleep soundly.

²⁵ You need not be afraid of sudden disaster or the destruction that comes upon the wicked,

²⁶ for the LORD is your security. He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.

Lord, Jesus was right: No divided kingdom can thrive—including ours. Inspire our leaders to model a way out of this thicket of divisiveness we are ensnared in. May their gracious words and reasoned actions inspire heartfelt unity. Amen.



GENESIS 37:1–38:30

So Jacob settled again in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived as a foreigner.

²This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father’s flocks. He worked for his half brothers, the sons of his father’s wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing.

³Jacob* loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe.* ⁴But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn’t say a kind word to him.

⁵One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. ⁶“Listen to this dream,” he said. ⁷“We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!”

⁸His brothers responded, “So you think you will be our king, do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them.

⁹Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. “Listen, I have had another dream,”

he said. “The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!”

¹⁰This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers, but his father scolded him. “What kind of dream is that?” he asked. “Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow to the ground before you?” ¹¹But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant.

¹²Soon after this, Joseph’s brothers went to pasture their father’s flocks at Shechem. ¹³When they had been gone for some time, Jacob said to Joseph, “Your brothers are pasturing the sheep at Shechem. Get ready, and I will send you to them.”

“I’m ready to go,” Joseph replied.

¹⁴“Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along,” Jacob said. “Then come back and bring me a report.” So Jacob sent him on his way, and Joseph traveled to Shechem from their home in the valley of Hebron.

¹⁵When he arrived there, a man from the area noticed him wandering around the countryside. “What are you looking for?” he asked.

¹⁶“I’m looking for my brothers,” Joseph replied. “Do you know where they are pasturing their sheep?”

¹⁷“Yes,” the man told him. “They have moved on from here, but I heard them say, ‘Let’s go on to Dothan.’” So Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan and found them there.

¹⁸When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance. As he approached, they made plans to kill him. ¹⁹"Here comes the dreamer!" they said. ²⁰"Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns. We can tell our father, 'A wild animal has eaten him.' Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!"

²¹But when Reuben heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph's rescue. "Let's not kill him," he said. ²²"Why should we shed any blood? Let's just throw him into this empty cistern here in the wilderness. Then he'll die without our laying a hand on him." Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to his father.

²³So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. ²⁴Then they grabbed him and threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it. ²⁵Then, just as they were sitting down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of camels in the distance coming toward them. It was a group of Ishmaelite traders taking a load of gum, balm, and aromatic resin from Gilead down to Egypt.

²⁶Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother? We'd have to cover up the crime.* ²⁷Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traders. After all, he is our brother—our own flesh and blood!" And his brothers agreed. ²⁸So when the Ishmaelites, who were Midianite traders, came by, Joseph's brothers pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to them for twenty pieces* of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt.

²⁹Some time later, Reuben returned to get Joseph out of the cistern. When he discovered that Joseph was missing, he tore his clothes in grief. ³⁰Then he went back to his brothers and lamented, "The boy is gone! What will I do now?"

³¹Then the brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph's robe in its blood. ³²They sent the beautiful robe to their father with this message: "Look

at what we found. Doesn't this robe belong to your son?"

³³Their father recognized it immediately. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's robe. A wild animal must have eaten him. Joseph has clearly been torn to pieces!" ³⁴Then Jacob tore his clothes and dressed himself in burlap. He mourned deeply for his son for a long time. ³⁵His family all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "I will go to my grave* mourning for my son," he would say, and then he would weep.

³⁶Meanwhile, the Midianite traders* arrived in Egypt, where they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

^{38:1}About this time, Judah left home and moved to Adullam, where he stayed with a man named Hirah. ²There he saw a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shua, and he married her. When he slept with her, ³she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and he named the boy Er. ⁴Then she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son, and she named him Onan. ⁵And when she gave birth to a third son, she named him Shelah. At the time of Shelah's birth, they were living at Kezib.

⁶In the course of time, Judah arranged for his firstborn son, Er, to marry a young woman named Tamar. ⁷But Er was a wicked man in the LORD's sight, so the LORD took his life. ⁸Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and marry Tamar, as our law requires of the brother of a man who has died. You must produce an heir for your brother."

⁹But Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground. This prevented her from having a child who would belong to his brother. ¹⁰But the LORD considered it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the LORD took Onan's life, too.

¹¹Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, “Go back to your parents’ home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old enough to marry you.” (But Judah didn’t really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers.) So Tamar went back to live in her father’s home.

¹²Some years later Judah’s wife died. After the time of mourning was over, Judah and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep. ¹³Someone told Tamar, “Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.”

¹⁴Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but no arrangements had been made for her to come and marry him. So she changed out of her widow’s clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. ¹⁵Judah noticed her and thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. ¹⁶So he stopped and propositioned her. “Let me have sex with you,” he said, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law.

“How much will you pay to have sex with me?” Tamar asked.

¹⁷“I’ll send you a young goat from my flock,” Judah promised.

“But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?” she asked.

¹⁸“What kind of guarantee do you want?” he replied.

She answered, “Leave me your identification seal and its cord and the walking stick you are carrying.” So Judah gave them to her. Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. ¹⁹Afterward she went back home, took off her veil, and put on her widow’s clothing as usual.

²⁰Later Judah asked his friend Hirah the Adullamite to take the young goat to the woman and to pick up the things he had given her as his guarantee. But Hirah couldn’t find her. ²¹So

he asked the men who lived there, “Where can I find the shrine prostitute who was sitting beside the road at the entrance to Enaim?”

“We’ve never had a shrine prostitute here,” they replied.

²²So Hirah returned to Judah and told him, “I couldn’t find her anywhere, and the men of the village claim they’ve never had a shrine prostitute there.”

²³“Then let her keep the things I gave her,” Judah said. “I sent the young goat as we agreed, but you couldn’t find her. We’d be the laughingstock of the village if we went back again to look for her.”

²⁴About three months later, Judah was told, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she’s pregnant.”

“Bring her out, and let her be burned!” Judah demanded.

²⁵But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: “The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are these?”

²⁶Judah recognized them immediately and said, “She is more righteous than I am, because I didn’t arrange for her to marry my son Shelah.” And Judah never slept with Tamar again.

²⁷When the time came for Tamar to give birth, it was discovered that she was carrying twins. ²⁸While she was in labor, one of the babies reached out his hand. The midwife grabbed it and tied a scarlet string around the child’s wrist, announcing, “This one came out first.” ²⁹But then he pulled back his hand, and out came his brother! “What!” the midwife exclaimed. “How did you break out first?” So he was named Perez.* ³⁰Then the baby with the scarlet string on his wrist was born, and he was named Zerah.*

37:3a Hebrew *Israel*; also in 37:13. See note on 35:21.

37:3b Traditionally rendered a *coat of many colors*.

The exact meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

37:26 Hebrew *cover his blood*. **37:28** Hebrew

20 [shekels], about 8 ounces or 228 grams in weight.

37:35 Hebrew *go down to Sheol*. **37:36** Hebrew *the*

Medanites. The relationship between the Midianites and Medanites is unclear; compare 37:28. See also 25:2. **38:29** *Perez* means “breaking out.” **38:30** *Zerah* means “scarlet” or “brightness.”

MATTHEW 12:22-45

Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn’t speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see. ²³The crowd was amazed and asked, “Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?”

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, “No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan,* the prince of demons.”

²⁵Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, “Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. ²⁶And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting against himself. His own kingdom will not survive. ²⁷And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said. ²⁸But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. ²⁹For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.

³⁰“Anyone who isn’t with me opposes me, and anyone who isn’t working with me is actually working against me.

³¹“So I tell you, every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven—except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven. ³²Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.

³³“A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad.

³⁴You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good

and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. ³⁵A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. ³⁶And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. ³⁷The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”

³⁸One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority.”

³⁹But Jesus replied, “Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

⁴¹“The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent. ⁴²The queen of Sheba* will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen.

⁴³“When an evil* spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none. ⁴⁴Then it says, ‘I will return to the person I came from.’ So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and in order. ⁴⁵Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before. That will be the experience of this evil generation.”

12:24 Greek *Beelzeboul*; also in 12:27. Other manuscripts read *Beezzeboul*; Latin version reads *Beelzebub*. **12:42** Greek *The queen of the south*. **12:43** Greek *unclean*.

PSALM 16:1-11

A psalm of David.*

- 1 Keep me safe, O God,
for I have come to you for refuge.
- 2 I said to the LORD, “You are my
Master!
Every good thing I have comes
from you.”
- 3 The godly people in the land
are my true heroes!
I take pleasure in them!
- 4 Troubles multiply for those who
chase after other gods.
I will not take part in their
sacrifices of blood
or even speak the names of
their gods.
- 5 LORD, you alone are my
inheritance, my cup of
blessing.
You guard all that is mine.
- 6 The land you have given me is a
pleasant land.
What a wonderful inheritance!
- 7 I will bless the LORD who
guides me;
even at night my heart
instructs me.
- 8 I know the LORD is always with me.
I will not be shaken, for he is
right beside me.
- 9 No wonder my heart is glad, and
I rejoice.*
My body rests in safety.

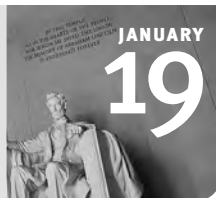
- 10 For you will not leave my soul
among the dead*
or allow your holy one* to rot in
the grave.
- 11 You will show me the way of life,
granting me the joy of your
presence
and the pleasures of living with
you forever.*

16:TITLE Hebrew *miktam*. This may be a literary or musical term. **16:9** Greek version reads *and my tongue shouts his praises*. Compare Acts 2:26. **16:10a** Hebrew *in Sheol*. **16:10b** Or *your Holy One*. **16:11** Greek version reads *You have shown me the way of life, / and you will fill me with the joy of your presence*. Compare Acts 2:28.

PROVERBS 3:27-32

- 27 Do not withhold good from those
who deserve it
when it’s in your power to help
them.
- 28 If you can help your neighbor now,
don’t say,
“Come back tomorrow, and then
I’ll help you.”
- 29 Don’t plot harm against your
neighbor,
for those who live nearby trust
you.
- 30 Don’t pick a fight without reason,
when no one has done you harm.
- 31 Don’t envy violent people
or copy their ways.
- 32 Such wicked people are detestable
to the LORD,
but he offers his friendship to
the godly.

Lord, today I echo the prayer of David: “O LORD, hear my plea for justice. Listen to my cry for help” (Psalm 17:1). Pour out justice on this nation. Fix what’s broken, restore what’s been stripped away, and show me my part in your ongoing work here. Amen.



GENESIS 39:1–41:16

When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

²The LORD was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as

he served in the home of his Egyptian master. ³Potiphar noticed this and realized that the LORD was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. ⁴This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he

owned. ⁵From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master's household and property, the LORD began to bless Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. ⁶So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!

Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, ⁷and Potiphar's wife soon began to look at him lustfully. "Come and sleep with me," she demanded.

⁸But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. ⁹No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."

¹⁰She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. ¹¹One day, however, no one else was around when he went in to do his work. ¹²She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, "Come on, sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

¹³When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, ¹⁴she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. "Look!" she said. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. ¹⁵When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me."

¹⁶She kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. ¹⁷Then she told him her story. "That Hebrew slave you've brought into our house tried to come in and fool around with me," she said. ¹⁸"But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!"

¹⁹Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife's story about how Jo-

seph had treated her. ²⁰So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held, and there he remained. ²¹But the LORD was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. ²²Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. ²³The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. The LORD was with him and caused everything he did to succeed.

^{40:1}Some time later, Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker offended their royal master. ²Pharaoh became angry with these two officials, ³and he put them in the prison where Joseph was, in the palace of the captain of the guard. ⁴They remained in prison for quite some time, and the captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, who looked after them.

⁵While they were in prison, Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker each had a dream one night, and each dream had its own meaning. ⁶When Joseph saw them the next morning, he noticed that they both looked upset. ⁷"Why do you look so worried today?" he asked them.

⁸And they replied, "We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean."

"Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied. "Go ahead and tell me your dreams."

⁹So the chief cup-bearer told Joseph his dream first. "In my dream," he said, "I saw a grapevine in front of me. ¹⁰The vine had three branches that began to bud and blossom, and soon it produced clusters of ripe grapes. ¹¹I was holding Pharaoh's wine cup in my hand, so I took a cluster of grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

¹²"This is what the dream means," Joseph said. "The three branches represent three days. ¹³Within three days Pharaoh will lift you up and restore you

to your position as his chief cup-bearer. ¹⁴And please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. ¹⁵For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it."

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given the first dream such a positive interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I had a dream, too. In my dream there were three baskets of white pastries stacked on my head. ¹⁷The top basket contained all kinds of pastries for Pharaoh, but the birds came and ate them from the basket on my head."

¹⁸"This is what the dream means," Joseph told him. "The three baskets also represent three days. ¹⁹Three days from now Pharaoh will lift you up and impale your body on a pole. Then birds will come and peck away at your flesh."

²⁰Pharaoh's birthday came three days later, and he prepared a banquet for all his officials and staff. He summoned* his chief cup-bearer and chief baker to join the other officials. ²¹He then restored the chief cup-bearer to his former position, so he could again hand Pharaoh his cup. ²²But Pharaoh impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had predicted when he interpreted his dream. ²³Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer, however, forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought.

^{41:1}Two full years later, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing on the bank of the Nile River. ²In his dream he saw seven fat, healthy cows come up out of the river and begin grazing in the marsh grass. ³Then he saw seven more cows come up behind them from the Nile, but these were scrawny and thin. These cows stood beside the fat cows on the riverbank. ⁴Then the scrawny, thin cows ate the seven healthy, fat cows! At this point in the dream, Pharaoh woke up.

⁵But he fell asleep again and had a second dream. This time he saw seven heads of grain, plump and beautiful,

growing on a single stalk. ⁶Then seven more heads of grain appeared, but these were shriveled and withered by the east wind. ⁷And these thin heads swallowed up the seven plump, well-formed heads! Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was a dream.

⁸The next morning Pharaoh was very disturbed by the dreams. So he called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. When Pharaoh told them his dreams, not one of them could tell him what they meant.

⁹Finally, the king's chief cup-bearer spoke up. "Today I have been reminded of my failure," he told Pharaoh. ¹⁰"Some time ago, you were angry with the chief baker and me, and you imprisoned us in the palace of the captain of the guard. ¹¹One night the chief baker and I each had a dream, and each dream had its own meaning. ¹²There was a young Hebrew man with us in the prison who was a slave of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he told us what each of our dreams meant. ¹³And everything happened just as he had predicted. I was restored to my position as cup-bearer, and the chief baker was executed and impaled on a pole."

¹⁴Pharaoh sent for Joseph at once, and he was quickly brought from the prison. After he shaved and changed his clothes, he went in and stood before Pharaoh. ¹⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I have heard that when you hear about a dream you can interpret it."

¹⁶"It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease."

40:20 Hebrew *He lifted up the head of.*

MATTHEW 12:46–13:23

As Jesus was speaking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak to you."*

⁴⁸Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹Then he

pointed to his disciples and said, “Look, these are my mother and brothers. ⁵⁰Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!”

^{13:1}Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. ²A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore. ³He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one:

“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. ⁴As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. ⁵Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn’t have deep roots, they died. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. ⁸Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! ⁹Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

¹⁰His disciples came and asked him, “Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?”

¹¹He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets* of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. ¹²To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. ¹³That is why I use these parables,

For they look, but they don’t really see.

They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand.

¹⁴This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says,

‘When you hear what I say,
you will not understand.

When you see what I do,
you will not comprehend.

¹⁵For the hearts of these people are hardened,
and their ears cannot hear,
and they have closed their eyes—
so their eyes cannot see,
and their ears cannot hear,
and their hearts cannot understand,
and they cannot turn to me
and let me heal them.*”

¹⁶“But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. ¹⁷I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn’t see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn’t hear it.

¹⁸“Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds: ¹⁹The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don’t understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. ²⁰The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ²¹But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. ²²The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. ²³The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

^{12:47} Some manuscripts do not include verse 47. Compare Mark 3:32 and Luke 8:20. ^{13:11} Greek the mysteries. ^{13:14-15} Isa 6:9-10 (Greek version).

PSALM 17:1-15

A prayer of David.

¹ O LORD, hear my plea for justice.
Listen to my cry for help.
Pay attention to my prayer,
for it comes from honest lips.

- ² Declare me innocent,
for you see those who do
right.
- ³ You have tested my thoughts and
examined my heart in the
night.
You have scrutinized me and
found nothing wrong.
I am determined not to sin in
what I say.
- ⁴ I have followed your commands,
which keep me from following
cruel and evil people.
- ⁵ My steps have stayed on your path;
I have not wavered from
following you.
- ⁶ I am praying to you because I
know you will answer,
O God.
Bend down and listen as I pray.
- ⁷ Show me your unfailing love in
wonderful ways.
By your mighty power you
rescue
those who seek refuge from
their enemies.
- ⁸ Guard me as you would guard
your own eyes.*
Hide me in the shadow of your
wings.
- ⁹ Protect me from wicked people
who attack me,
from murderous enemies who
surround me.
- ¹⁰ They are without pity.
Listen to their boasting!
- ¹¹ They track me down and
surround me,

- watching for the chance to
throw me to the ground.
- ¹² They are like hungry lions, eager to
tear me apart—
like young lions hiding in
ambush.
- ¹³ Arise, O LORD!
Stand against them, and bring
them to their knees!
Rescue me from the wicked with
your sword!
- ¹⁴ By the power of your hand,
O LORD,
destroy those who look to this
world for their reward.
But satisfy the hunger of your
treasured ones.
May their children have plenty,
leaving an inheritance for their
descendants.
- ¹⁵ Because I am righteous, I will see
you.
When I awake, I will see you
face to face and be satisfied.

17:8 Hebrew as the pupil of your eye.

PROVERBS 3:33-35

- ³³ The LORD curses the house of the
wicked,
but he blesses the home of the
upright.
- ³⁴ The LORD mocks the mockers
but is gracious to the humble.*
- ³⁵ The wise inherit honor,
but fools are put to shame!

3:34 Greek version reads *The LORD opposes the proud / but gives grace to the humble.* Compare Jas 4:6;
¹ Pet 5:5.

*Lord, today I thank you for godly leaders, for those
who have a vision of a nation of equals and their dogged
determination in the face of all that comes against them.
Fill our land with principled leaders, Lord. Amen.*



GENESIS 41:17-42:17

So Pharaoh told Joseph his dream. "In my dream," he said, "I was standing on the bank of the Nile River,¹⁸ and I saw seven fat, healthy cows come up out of the river and begin grazing

in the marsh grass.¹⁹ But then I saw seven sick-looking cows, scrawny and thin, come up after them. I've never seen such sorry-looking animals in all the land of Egypt.²⁰ These thin, scrawny cows ate the seven fat

cows. ²¹But afterward you wouldn't have known it, for they were still as thin and scrawny as before! Then I woke up.

²²"In my dream I also saw seven heads of grain, full and beautiful, growing on a single stalk. ²³Then seven more heads of grain appeared, but these were blighted, shriveled, and withered by the east wind. ²⁴And the shriveled heads swallowed the seven healthy heads. I told these dreams to the magicians, but no one could tell me what they mean."

²⁵Joseph responded, "Both of Pharaoh's dreams mean the same thing. God is telling Pharaoh in advance what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven healthy cows and the seven healthy heads of grain both represent seven years of prosperity. ²⁷The seven thin, scrawny cows that came up later and the seven thin heads of grain, withered by the east wind, represent seven years of famine.

²⁸"This will happen just as I have described it, for God has revealed to Pharaoh in advance what he is about to do. ²⁹The next seven years will be a period of great prosperity throughout the land of Egypt. ³⁰But afterward there will be seven years of famine so great that all the prosperity will be forgotten in Egypt. Famine will destroy the land. ³¹This famine will be so severe that even the memory of the good years will be erased. ³²As for having two similar dreams, it means that these events have been decreed by God, and he will soon make them happen.

³³"Therefore, Pharaoh should find an intelligent and wise man and put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt. ³⁴Then Pharaoh should appoint supervisors over the land and let them collect one-fifth of all the crops during the seven good years. ³⁵Have them gather all the food produced in the good years that are just ahead and bring it to Pharaoh's storehouses. Store it away, and guard it so there will be food in the cities. ³⁶That way there will be enough to eat when the seven years of famine come to the

land of Egypt. Otherwise this famine will destroy the land."

³⁷Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his officials. ³⁸So Pharaoh asked his officials, "Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?" ³⁹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. ⁴⁰You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours."

⁴¹Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt." ⁴²Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand and placed it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in fine linen clothing and hung a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³Then he had Joseph ride in the chariot reserved for his second-in-command. And wherever Joseph went, the command was shouted, "Kneel down!" So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt. ⁴⁴And Pharaoh said to him, "I am Pharaoh, but no one will lift a hand or foot in the entire land of Egypt without your approval."

⁴⁵Then Pharaoh gave Joseph a new Egyptian name, Zaphenath-paneah.* He also gave him a wife, whose name was Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On.* So Joseph took charge of the entire land of Egypt. ⁴⁶He was thirty years old when he began serving in the court of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. And when Joseph left Pharaoh's presence, he inspected the entire land of Egypt.

⁴⁷As predicted, for seven years the land produced bumper crops. ⁴⁸During those years, Joseph gathered all the crops grown in Egypt and stored the grain from the surrounding fields in the cities. ⁴⁹He piled up huge amounts of grain like sand on the seashore. Finally, he stopped keeping records because there was too much to measure.

⁵⁰During this time, before the first of the famine years, two sons were

born to Joseph and his wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On. ⁵¹Joseph named his older son Manasseh,* for he said, “God has made me forget all my troubles and everyone in my father’s family.” ⁵²Joseph named his second son Ephraim,* for he said, “God has made me fruitful in this land of my grief.”

⁵³At last the seven years of bumper crops throughout the land of Egypt came to an end. ⁵⁴Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had predicted. The famine also struck all the surrounding countries, but throughout Egypt there was plenty of food. ⁵⁵Eventually, however, the famine spread throughout the land of Egypt as well. And when the people cried out to Pharaoh for food, he told them, “Go to Joseph, and do whatever he tells you.” ⁵⁶So with severe famine everywhere, Joseph opened up the storehouses and distributed grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷And people from all around came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe throughout the world.

^{42:1}When Jacob heard that grain was available in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why are you standing around looking at one another? ²I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there, and buy enough grain to keep us alive. Otherwise we’ll die.”

³So Joseph’s ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain. ⁴But Jacob wouldn’t let Joseph’s younger brother, Benjamin, go with them, for fear some harm might come to him. ⁵So Jacob’s* sons arrived in Egypt along with others to buy food, for the famine was in Canaan as well.

⁶Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling grain to all the people, it was to him that his brothers came. When they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground. ⁷Joseph recognized his brothers instantly, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. “Where are you from?” he demanded.

“From the land of Canaan,” they replied. “We have come to buy food.”

⁸Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they didn’t recognize him. ⁹And he remembered the dreams he’d had about them many years before. He said to them, “You are spies! You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become.”

¹⁰“No, my lord!” they exclaimed. “Your servants have simply come to buy food. ¹¹We are all brothers—members of the same family. We are honest men, sir! We are not spies!”

¹²“Yes, you are!” Joseph insisted. “You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become.”

¹³“Sir,” they said, “there are actually twelve of us. We, your servants, are all brothers, sons of a man living in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is back there with our father right now, and one of our brothers is no longer with us.”

¹⁴But Joseph insisted, “As I said, you are spies! ¹⁵This is how I will test your story. I swear by the life of Pharaoh that you will never leave Egypt unless your youngest brother comes here! ¹⁶One of you must go and get your brother. I’ll keep the rest of you here in prison. Then we’ll find out whether or not your story is true. By the life of Pharaoh, if it turns out that you don’t have a younger brother, then I’ll know you are spies.”

¹⁷So Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

41:45a *Zaphenath-paneah* probably means “God speaks and lives.” **41:45b** Greek version reads of *Heliopolis*; also in 41:50. **41:51** *Manasseh* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “causing to forget.” **41:52** *Ephraim* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “fruitful.” **42:5** Hebrew *Israel*’s. See note on 35:21.

MATTHEW 13:24-46

Here is another story Jesus told: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. ²⁵But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. ²⁶When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew.

²⁷“The farmer’s workers went to him

and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’

²⁸“‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed.

“‘Should we pull out the weeds?’ they asked.

²⁹“‘No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’”

³¹Here is another illustration Jesus used: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

³³Jesus also used this illustration: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.”

³⁴Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.

³⁵This fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet:

“I will speak to you in parables.
I will explain things hidden
since the creation of the
world.*”

³⁶Then, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, “Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷Jesus replied, “The Son of Man* is the farmer who plants the good seed.

³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. ³⁹The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world,* and the harvesters are the angels.

⁴⁰“Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. ⁴¹The Son of

Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴²And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

⁴⁴“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

⁴⁵“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. ⁴⁶When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!”

13:35 Some manuscripts do not include *of the world*.
Ps 78:2. **13:37** “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself. **13:39** *Or the age*; also in 13:40, 49.

PSALM 18:1-15

For the choir director: A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD. He sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. He sang:

- 1 I love you, LORD;
you are my strength.
- 2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress,
and my savior;
my God is my rock, in whom
I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that
saves me,
and my place of safety.
- 3 I called on the LORD, who is
worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my
enemies.
- 4 The ropes of death entangled me;
floods of destruction swept
over me.
- 5 The grave* wrapped its ropes
around me;
death laid a trap in my path.
- 6 But in my distress I cried out to the
LORD;
yes, I prayed to my God for help.
He heard me from his sanctuary;
my cry to him reached his ears.

- 7 Then the earth quaked and trembled.
The foundations of the mountains shook;
they quaked because of his anger.
- 8 Smoke poured from his nostrils;
fierce flames leaped from his mouth.
Glowing coals blazed forth from him.
- 9 He opened the heavens and came down;
dark storm clouds were beneath his feet.
- 10 Mounted on a mighty angelic being,* he flew,
soaring on the wings of the wind.
- 11 He shrouded himself in darkness,
veiling his approach with dark rain clouds.
- 12 Thick clouds shielded the brightness around him
and rained down hail and burning coals.*
- 13 The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded
amid the hail and burning coals.
- 14 He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies;
great bolts of lightning flashed,
and they were confused.

- 15 Then at your command, O LORD,
at the blast of your breath,
the bottom of the sea could be seen,
and the foundations of the earth were laid bare.

18:5 Hebrew *Sheol*. 18:10 Hebrew *a cherub*.
18:12 Or *and lightning bolts*; also in 18:13.

PROVERBS 4:1-6

- 1 My children,* listen when your father corrects you.
Pay attention and learn good judgment,
- 2 for I am giving you good guidance.
Don't turn away from my instructions.
- 3 For I, too, was once my father's son,
tenderly loved as my mother's only child.
- 4 My father taught me,
"Take my words to heart.
Follow my commands, and you will live.
- 5 Get wisdom; develop good judgment.
Don't forget my words or turn away from them.
- 6 Don't turn your back on wisdom,
for she will protect you.
Love her, and she will guard you."

4:1 Hebrew *My sons*.

Lord, those who thought they knew Jesus let that familiarity blind them to his message. Protect all who lead from this mistake, Lord. Don't let prejudice or bias get in the way of hearing from you and those who serve you. Amen.



GENESIS 42:18-43:34

On the third day Joseph said to them [his brothers], "I am a God-fearing man. If you do as I say, you will live. 19 If you really are honest men, choose one of your brothers to remain in prison. The rest of you may go home with grain for your starving families. 20 But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. This will prove

that you are telling the truth, and you will not die." To this they agreed.

21 Speaking among themselves, they said, "Clearly we are being punished because of what we did to Joseph long ago. We saw his anguish when he pleaded for his life, but we wouldn't listen. That's why we're in this trouble."

22 "Didn't I tell you not to sin against

the boy?" Reuben asked. "But you wouldn't listen. And now we have to answer for his blood!"

²³Of course, they didn't know that Joseph understood them, for he had been speaking to them through an interpreter. ²⁴Now he turned away from them and began to weep. When he regained his composure, he spoke to them again. Then he chose Simeon from among them and had him tied up right before their eyes.

²⁵Joseph then ordered his servants to fill the men's sacks with grain, but he also gave secret instructions to return each brother's payment at the top of his sack. He also gave them supplies for their journey home. ²⁶So the brothers loaded their donkeys with the grain and headed for home.

²⁷But when they stopped for the night and one of them opened his sack to get grain for his donkey, he found his money in the top of his sack. ²⁸"Look!" he exclaimed to his brothers. "My money has been returned; it's here in my sack!" Then their hearts sank. Trembling, they said to each other, "What has God done to us?"

²⁹When the brothers came to their father, Jacob, in the land of Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them. ³⁰"The man who is governor of the land spoke very harshly to us," they told him. "He accused us of being spies scouting the land. ³¹But we said, 'We are honest men, not spies. ³²We are twelve brothers, sons of one father. One brother is no longer with us, and the youngest is at home with our father in the land of Canaan.'

³³"Then the man who is governor of the land told us, 'This is how I will find out if you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers here with me, and take grain for your starving families and go on home. ³⁴But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. Then I will know you are honest men and not spies. Then I will give you back your brother, and you may trade freely in the land.'"

³⁵As they emptied out their sacks,

there in each man's sack was the bag of money he had paid for the grain! The brothers and their father were terrified when they saw the bags of money. ³⁶Jacob exclaimed, "You are robbing me of my children! Joseph is gone! Simeon is gone! And now you want to take Benjamin, too. Everything is going against me!"

³⁷Then Reuben said to his father, "You may kill my two sons if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. I'll be responsible for him, and I promise to bring him back."

³⁸But Jacob replied, "My son will not go down with you. His brother Joseph is dead, and he is all I have left. If anything should happen to him on your journey, you would send this grieving, white-haired man to his grave.*"

^{43:1}But the famine continued to ravage the land of Canaan. ²When the grain they had brought from Egypt was almost gone, Jacob said to his sons, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

³But Judah said, "The man was serious when he warned us, 'You won't see my face again unless your brother is with you.' ⁴If you send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy more food. ⁵But if you don't let Benjamin go, we won't go either. Remember, the man said, 'You won't see my face again unless your brother is with you.'"

⁶"Why were you so cruel to me?" Jacob* moaned. "Why did you tell him you had another brother?"

⁷"The man kept asking us questions about our family," they replied. "He asked, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' So we answered his questions. How could we know he would say, 'Bring your brother down here?'"

⁸Judah said to his father, "Send the boy with me, and we will be on our way. Otherwise we will all die of starvation—and not only we, but you and our little ones. ⁹I personally guarantee his safety. You may hold me responsible if I don't bring him

back to you. Then let me bear the blame forever. ¹⁰If we hadn't wasted all this time, we could have gone and returned twice by now."

¹¹So their father, Jacob, finally said to them, "If it can't be avoided, then at least do this. Pack your bags with the best products of this land. Take them down to the man as gifts—balm, honey, gum, aromatic resin, pistachio nuts, and almonds. ¹²Also take double the money that was put back in your sacks, as it was probably someone's mistake. ¹³Then take your brother, and go back to the man. ¹⁴May God Almighty* give you mercy as you go before the man, so that he will release Simeon and let Benjamin return. But if I must lose my children, so be it."

¹⁵So the men packed Jacob's gifts and double the money and headed off with Benjamin. They finally arrived in Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph. ¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the manager of his household, "These men will eat with me this noon. Take them inside the palace. Then go slaughter an animal, and prepare a big feast." ¹⁷So the man did as Joseph told him and took them into Joseph's palace.

¹⁸The brothers were terrified when they saw that they were being taken into Joseph's house. "It's because of the money someone put in our sacks last time we were here," they said. "He plans to pretend that we stole it. Then he will seize us, make us slaves, and take our donkeys."

¹⁹The brothers approached the manager of Joseph's household and spoke to him at the entrance to the palace. ²⁰"Sir," they said, "we came to Egypt once before to buy food. ²¹But as we were returning home, we stopped for the night and opened our sacks. Then we discovered that each man's money—the exact amount paid—was in the top of his sack! Here it is; we have brought it back with us. ²²We also have additional money to buy more food. We have no idea who put our money in our sacks."

²³"Relax. Don't be afraid," the house-

hold manager told them. "Your God, the God of your father, must have put this treasure into your sacks. I know I received your payment." Then he released Simeon and brought him out to them.

²⁴The manager then led the men into Joseph's palace. He gave them water to wash their feet and provided food for their donkeys. ²⁵They were told they would be eating there, so they prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon.

²⁶When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought him, then bowed low to the ground before him. ²⁷After greeting them, he asked, "How is your father, the old man you spoke about? Is he still alive?"

²⁸"Yes," they replied. "Our father, your servant, is alive and well." And they bowed low again.

²⁹Then Joseph looked at his brother Benjamin, the son of his own mother. "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" Joseph asked. "May God be gracious to you, my son."

³⁰Then Joseph hurried from the room because he was overcome with emotion for his brother. He went into his private room, where he broke down and wept.

³¹After washing his face, he came back out, keeping himself under control. Then he ordered, "Bring out the food!"

³²The waiters served Joseph at his own table, and his brothers were served at a separate table. The Egyptians who ate with Joseph sat at their own table, because Egyptians despise Hebrews and refuse to eat with them.

³³Joseph told each of his brothers where to sit, and to their amazement, he seated them according to age, from oldest to youngest. ³⁴And Joseph filled their plates with food from his own table, giving Benjamin five times as much as he gave the others. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

42:38 Hebrew *to Sheol*. **43:6** Hebrew *Israel*; also in 43:11. See note on 35:21. **43:14** Hebrew *El-Shaddai*.

MATTHEW 13:47–14:12

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind.

⁴⁸When the net was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away. ⁴⁹That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous, ⁵⁰throwing the wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹Do you understand all these things?"

"Yes," they said, "we do."

⁵²Then he added, "Every teacher of religious law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a homeowner who brings from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old."

⁵³When Jesus had finished telling these stories and illustrations, he left that part of the country. ⁵⁴He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, "Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?" ⁵⁵Then they scoffed, "He's just the carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph,* Simon, and Judas. ⁵⁶All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?" ⁵⁷And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him.

Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family." ⁵⁸And so he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.

^{14:1}When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee,* heard about Jesus, ²he said to his advisers, "This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead! That is why he can do such miracles."

³For Herod had arrested and imprisoned John as a favor to his wife Herodias (the former wife of Herod's brother Philip). ⁴John had been telling Herod, "It is against God's law for you to marry her." ⁵Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of a riot, because all the people believed John was a prophet.

⁶But at a birthday party for Herod,

Herodias's daughter performed a dance that greatly pleased him, ⁷so he promised with a vow to give her anything she wanted. ⁸At her mother's urging, the girl said, "I want the head of John the Baptist on a tray!" ⁹Then the king regretted what he had said; but because of the vow he had made in front of his guests, he issued the necessary orders. ¹⁰So John was beheaded in the prison, ¹¹and his head was brought on a tray and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. ¹²Later, John's disciples came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened.

13:55 Other manuscripts read *Joses*; still others read *John*. **14:1** Greek *Herod the tetrarch*. Herod Antipas was a son of King Herod and was ruler over Galilee.

PSALM 18:16-36

- ¹⁶ He reached down from heaven and rescued me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
- ¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful enemies,
from those who hated me and were too strong for me.
- ¹⁸ They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress,
but the LORD supported me.
- ¹⁹ He led me to a place of safety;
he rescued me because he delights in me.
- ²⁰ The LORD rewarded me for doing right;
he restored me because of my innocence.
- ²¹ For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I have not turned from my God to follow evil.
- ²² I have followed all his regulations;
I have never abandoned his decrees.
- ²³ I am blameless before God;
I have kept myself from sin.
- ²⁴ The LORD rewarded me for doing right.
He has seen my innocence.
- ²⁵ To the faithful you show yourself faithful;
to those with integrity you show integrity.

- ²⁶ To the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.
- ²⁷ You rescue the humble,
but you humiliate the proud.
- ²⁸ You light a lamp for me.
The LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.
- ²⁹ In your strength I can crush an army;
with my God I can scale any wall.
- ³⁰ God's way is perfect.
All the LORD's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.
- ³¹ For who is God except the LORD?
Who but our God is a solid rock?
- ³² God arms me with strength,
and he makes my way perfect.
- ³³ He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
enabling me to stand on mountain heights.
- ³⁴ He trains my hands for battle;

- he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.
- ³⁵ You have given me your shield of victory.
Your right hand supports me;
your help* has made me great.
- ³⁶ You have made a wide path for my feet
to keep them from slipping.
- 18:35** Hebrew *your humility*; compare 2 Sam 22:36.

PROVERBS 4:7-10

- ⁷ "Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do!
And whatever else you do,
develop good judgment.
- ⁸ If you prize wisdom, she will make you great.
Embrace her, and she will honor you.
- ⁹ She will place a lovely wreath on your head;
she will present you with a beautiful crown."
- ¹⁰ My child,* listen to me and do as I say,
and you will have a long, good life.

4:10 Hebrew *My son*; also in 4:20.

Lord, you do so much with so little. With a couple fish and a few loaves you feed thousands. It can be difficult to imagine what you can do with our small offerings. Teach us to trust you; take what little we offer and keep building, Lord. You're amazing! Amen.



GENESIS 44:1-45:28

When his brothers were ready to leave, Joseph gave these instructions to his palace manager: "Fill each of their sacks with as much grain as they can carry, and put each man's money back into his sack. ²Then put my personal silver cup at the top of the youngest brother's sack, along with the money for his grain." So the manager did as Joseph instructed him.

³The brothers were up at dawn and were sent on their journey with their loaded donkeys. ⁴But when they had gone only a short distance and were

barely out of the city, Joseph said to his palace manager, "Chase after them and stop them. When you catch up with them, ask them, 'Why have you repaid my kindness with such evil? ⁵Why have you stolen my master's silver cup,* which he uses to predict the future? What a wicked thing you have done!'"

⁶When the palace manager caught up with the men, he spoke to them as he had been instructed.

⁷"What are you talking about?" the brothers responded. "We are your servants and would never do such a

thing! ⁸Didn't we return the money we found in our sacks? We brought it back all the way from the land of Canaan. Why would we steal silver or gold from your master's house? ⁹If you find his cup with any one of us, let that man die. And all the rest of us, my lord, will be your slaves."

¹⁰"That's fair," the man replied. "But only the one who stole the cup will be my slave. The rest of you may go free."

¹¹They all quickly took their sacks from the backs of their donkeys and opened them. ¹²The palace manager searched the brothers' sacks, from the oldest to the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack! ¹³When the brothers saw this, they tore their clothing in despair. Then they loaded their donkeys again and returned to the city.

¹⁴Joseph was still in his palace when Judah and his brothers arrived, and they fell to the ground before him. ¹⁵"What have you done?" Joseph demanded. "Don't you know that a man like me can predict the future?"

¹⁶Judah answered, "Oh, my lord, what can we say to you? How can we explain this? How can we prove our innocence? God is punishing us for our sins. My lord, we have all returned to be your slaves—all of us, not just our brother who had your cup in his sack."

¹⁷"No," Joseph said. "I would never do such a thing! Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. The rest of you may go back to your father in peace."

¹⁸Then Judah stepped forward and said, "Please, my lord, let your servant say just one word to you. Please, do not be angry with me, even though you are as powerful as Pharaoh himself.

¹⁹"My lord, previously you asked us, your servants, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' ²⁰And we responded, 'Yes, my lord, we have a father who is an old man, and his youngest son is a child of his old age. His full brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him very much.'

²¹"And you said to us, 'Bring him here so I can see him with my own eyes.' ²²But we said to you, 'My lord, the boy cannot leave his father, for his father would die.' ²³But you told us, 'Unless your youngest brother comes with you, you will never see my face again.'

²⁴"So we returned to your servant, our father, and told him what you had said. ²⁵Later, when he said, 'Go back again and buy us more food,' ²⁶we replied, 'We can't go unless you let our youngest brother go with us. We'll never get to see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

²⁷"Then my father said to us, 'As you know, my wife had two sons, ²⁸and one of them went away and never returned. Doubtless he was torn to pieces by some wild animal. I have never seen him since. ²⁹Now if you take his brother away from me, and any harm comes to him, you will send this grieving, white-haired man to his grave.*'

³⁰"And now, my lord, I cannot go back to my father without the boy. Our father's life is bound up in the boy's life. ³¹If he sees that the boy is not with us, our father will die. We, your servants, will indeed be responsible for sending that grieving, white-haired man to his grave. ³²My lord, I guaranteed to my father that I would take care of the boy. I told him, 'If I don't bring him back to you, I will bear the blame forever.'

³³"So please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. ³⁴For how can I return to my father if the boy is not with me? I couldn't bear to see the anguish this would cause my father!"

^{45:1}Joseph could stand it no longer. There were many people in the room, and he said to his attendants, "Out, all of you!" So he was alone with his brothers when he told them who he was. ²Then he broke down and wept. He wept so loudly the Egyptians could hear him, and word of it quickly carried to Pharaoh's palace.

³“I am Joseph!” he said to his brothers. “Is my father still alive?” But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. ⁴“Please, come closer,” he said to them. So they came closer. And he said again, “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. ⁵But don’t be upset, and don’t be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives. ⁶This famine that has ravaged the land for two years will last five more years, and there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷God has sent me ahead of you to keep you and your families alive and to preserve many survivors.* ⁸So it was God who sent me here, not you! And he is the one who made me an adviser* to Pharaoh—the manager of his entire palace and the governor of all Egypt.

⁹“Now hurry back to my father and tell him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt. So come down to me immediately! ¹⁰You can live in the region of Goshen, where you can be near me with all your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and everything you own. ¹¹I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead of us. Otherwise you, your household, and all your animals will starve.”

¹²Then Joseph added, “Look! You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that I really am Joseph! ¹³Go tell my father of my honored position here in Egypt. Describe for him everything you have seen, and then bring my father here quickly.” ¹⁴Weeping with joy, he embraced Benjamin, and Benjamin did the same. ¹⁵Then Joseph kissed each of his brothers and wept over them, and after that they began talking freely with him.

¹⁶The news soon reached Pharaoh’s palace: “Joseph’s brothers have arrived!” Pharaoh and his officials were all delighted to hear this.

¹⁷Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘This is what you must do: Load your pack animals, and hurry back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Then get your father and all of your families, and return here to me. I will give you the very best land in Egypt, and you will eat from the best that the land produces.”

¹⁹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Take wagons from the land of Egypt to carry your little children and your wives, and bring your father here. ²⁰Don’t worry about your personal belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.”

²¹So the sons of Jacob* did as they were told. Joseph provided them with wagons, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he gave them supplies for the journey. ²²And he gave each of them new clothes—but to Benjamin he gave five changes of clothes and 300 pieces* of silver. ²³He also sent his father ten male donkeys loaded with the finest products of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other supplies he would need on his journey.

²⁴So Joseph sent his brothers off, and as they left, he called after them, “Don’t quarrel about all this along the way!” ²⁵And they left Egypt and returned to their father, Jacob, in the land of Canaan.

²⁶“Joseph is still alive!” they told him. “And he is governor of all the land of Egypt!” Jacob was stunned at the news—he couldn’t believe it. ²⁷But when they repeated to Jacob everything Joseph had told them, and when he saw the wagons Joseph had sent to carry him, their father’s spirits revived.

²⁸Then Jacob exclaimed, “It must be true! My son Joseph is alive! I must go and see him before I die.”

44:5 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks this phrase.
44:29 Hebrew to Sheol; also in 44:31. 45:7 Or and to save you with an extraordinary rescue. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 45:8 Hebrew a father.
45:21 Hebrew Israel; also in 45:28. See note on 35:21.
45:22 Hebrew 300 [shekels], about 75 pounds or 3.4 kilograms in weight.

MATTHEW 14:13-36

As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. ¹⁴Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.”

¹⁶But Jesus said, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them.”

¹⁷“But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!” they answered.

¹⁸“Bring them here,” he said. ¹⁹Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. ²⁰They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. ²¹About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!

²²Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. ²³After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

²⁴Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. ²⁵About three o’clock in the morning* Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, “It’s a ghost!”

²⁷But Jesus spoke to them at once. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Take courage. I am here!*

²⁸Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if

it’s really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.”

²⁹“Yes, come,” Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the strong* wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted.

³¹Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?”

³²When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³Then the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they exclaimed.

³⁴After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret. ³⁵When the people recognized Jesus, the news of his arrival spread quickly throughout the whole area, and soon people were bringing all their sick to be healed. ³⁶They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.

14:25 Greek *In the fourth watch of the night.* **14:27** Or *The ‘I AM’ is here;* Greek reads *I am.* See Exod 3:14.
14:30 Some manuscripts do not include *strong.*

PSALM 18:37-50

³⁷ I chased my enemies and caught them;

I did not stop until they were conquered.

³⁸ I struck them down so they could not get up;
they fell beneath my feet.

³⁹ You have armed me with strength for the battle;
you have subdued my enemies under my feet.

⁴⁰ You placed my foot on their necks.

I have destroyed all who hated me.

⁴¹ They called for help, but no one came to their rescue.

They even cried to the LORD, but he refused to answer.

⁴² I ground them as fine as dust in the wind.

I swept them into the gutter like dirt.

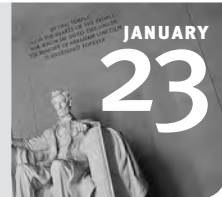
- ⁴³ You gave me victory over my accusers.
 You appointed me ruler over nations;
 people I don't even know now serve me.
- ⁴⁴ As soon as they hear of me, they submit;
 foreign nations cringe before me.
- ⁴⁵ They all lose their courage and come trembling from their strongholds.
- ⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise to my Rock!
 May the God of my salvation be exalted!
- ⁴⁷ He is the God who pays back those who harm me;
 he subdues the nations under me
- ⁴⁸ and rescues me from my enemies.
 You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies;

- you save me from violent opponents.
- ⁴⁹ For this, O LORD, I will praise you among the nations;
 I will sing praises to your name.
- ⁵⁰ You give great victories to your king;
 you show unfailing love to your anointed,
 to David and all his descendants forever.

PROVERBS 4:11-13

- ¹¹ I will teach you wisdom's ways and lead you in straight paths.
- ¹² When you walk, you won't be held back;
 when you run, you won't stumble.
- ¹³ Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go.
 Guard them, for they are the key to life.

Lord, today I pray for those who lead the way when dangers appear. For first responders like firefighters and police officers, for all those who risk their lives for the safety of others: Protect them, Lord, and give them joy. Amen.



GENESIS 46:1-47:31

So Jacob* set out for Egypt with all his possessions. And when he came to Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father, Isaac. ²During the night God spoke to him in a vision. "Jacob! Jacob!" he called.

"Here I am," Jacob replied.

³"I am God,* the God of your father," the voice said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make your family into a great nation.

⁴I will go with you down to Egypt, and I will bring you back again. You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be with you to close your eyes."

⁵So Jacob left Beersheba, and his sons took him to Egypt. They carried him and their little ones and their wives in the wagons Pharaoh had provided for them. ⁶They also took all their

livestock and all the personal belongings they had acquired in the land of Canaan. So Jacob and his entire family went to Egypt—⁷sons and grandsons, daughters and granddaughters—all his descendants.

⁸These are the names of the descendants of Israel—the sons of Jacob—who went to Egypt:

Reuben was Jacob's oldest son. ⁹The sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

¹⁰The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul's mother was a Canaanite woman.)

¹¹The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹²The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (though

Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

¹³The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puah,* Jashub,* and Shimron.

¹⁴The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵These were the sons of Leah and Jacob who were born in Paddan-aram, in addition to their daughter, Dinah. The number of Jacob's descendants (male and female) through Leah was thirty-three.

¹⁶The sons of Gad were Zephon,* Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷The sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was Serah. Beriah's sons were Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸These were the sons of Zilpah, the servant given to Leah by her father, Laban. The number of Jacob's descendants through Zilpah was sixteen.

¹⁹The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁰Joseph's sons, born in the land of Egypt, were Manasseh and Ephraim. Their mother was Asenath, daughter of Potiphra, the priest of On.*

²¹Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²²These were the sons of Rachel and Jacob. The number of Jacob's descendants through Rachel was fourteen.

²³The son of Dan was Hushim.

²⁴The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵These were the sons of Bilhah, the servant given to Rachel by her father, Laban. The number of Jacob's descendants through Bilhah was seven.

²⁶The total number of Jacob's direct descendants who went with him to Egypt, not counting his sons' wives, was sixty-six. ²⁷In addition, Joseph had two sons* who were born in Egypt. So altogether, there were seventy* members of Jacob's family in the land of Egypt.

²⁸As they neared their destination, Jacob sent Judah ahead to meet Joseph and get directions to the region of Goshen. And when they finally arrived there, ²⁹Joseph prepared his chariot and traveled to Goshen to meet his father, Jacob. When Joseph arrived, he embraced his father and wept, holding him for a long time. ³⁰Finally, Jacob said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen your face again and know you are still alive."

³¹And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's entire family, "I will go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'My brothers and my father's entire family have come to me from the land of Canaan. ³²These men are shepherds, and they raise livestock. They have brought with them their flocks and herds and everything they own.'"

³³Then he said, "When Pharaoh calls for you and asks you about your occupation, ³⁴you must tell him, 'We, your servants, have raised livestock all our lives, as our ancestors have always done.' When you tell him this, he will let you live here in the region of Goshen, for the Egyptians despise shepherds."

^{47:1}Then Joseph went to see Pharaoh and told him, "My father and my brothers have arrived from the land of Canaan. They have come with all their flocks and herds and possessions, and they are now in the region of Goshen."

²Joseph took five of his brothers with him and presented them to Pharaoh. ³And Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?"

They replied, "We, your servants, are shepherds, just like our ancestors. ⁴We have come to live here in Egypt for a while, for there is no pasture for our flocks in Canaan. The famine is very severe there. So please, we request permission to live in the region of Goshen."

⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Now that your father and brothers have joined you here, ⁶choose any place in the entire land of Egypt for them to live. Give them the best land

of Egypt. Let them live in the region of Goshen. And if any of them have special skills, put them in charge of my livestock, too.”

⁷Then Joseph brought in his father, Jacob, and presented him to Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

⁸“How old are you?” Pharaoh asked him.

⁹Jacob replied, “I have traveled this earth for 130 hard years. But my life has been short compared to the lives of my ancestors.” ¹⁰Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh again before leaving his court.

¹¹So Joseph assigned the best land of Egypt—the region of Rameses—to his father and his brothers, and he settled them there, just as Pharaoh had commanded. ¹²And Joseph provided food for his father and his brothers in amounts appropriate to the number of their dependents, including the smallest children.

¹³Meanwhile, the famine became so severe that all the food was used up, and people were starving throughout the lands of Egypt and Canaan. ¹⁴By selling grain to the people, Joseph eventually collected all the money in Egypt and Canaan, and he put the money in Pharaoh’s treasury. ¹⁵When the people of Egypt and Canaan ran out of money, all the Egyptians came to Joseph. “Our money is gone!” they cried. “But please give us food, or we will die before your very eyes!”

¹⁶Joseph replied, “Since your money is gone, bring me your livestock. I will give you food in exchange for your livestock.” ¹⁷So they brought their livestock to Joseph in exchange for food. In exchange for their horses, flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and donkeys, Joseph provided them with food for another year.

¹⁸But that year ended, and the next year they came again and said, “We cannot hide the truth from you, my lord. Our money is gone, and all our livestock and cattle are yours. We have nothing left to give but our bodies and our land. ¹⁹Why should we die before your very eyes? Buy us and our land in

exchange for food; we offer our land and ourselves as slaves for Pharaoh. Just give us grain so we may live and not die, and so the land does not become empty and desolate.”

²⁰So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the Egyptians sold him their fields because the famine was so severe, and soon all the land belonged to Pharaoh. ²¹As for the people, he made them all slaves,* from one end of Egypt to the other. ²²The only land he did not buy was the land belonging to the priests. They received an allotment of food directly from Pharaoh, so they didn’t need to sell their land.

²³Then Joseph said to the people, “Look, today I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. I will provide you with seed so you can plant the fields. ²⁴Then when you harvest it, one-fifth of your crop will belong to Pharaoh. You may keep the remaining four-fifths as seed for your fields and as food for you, your households, and your little ones.”

²⁵“You have saved our lives!” they exclaimed. “May it please you, my lord, to let us be Pharaoh’s servants.” ²⁶Joseph then issued a decree still in effect in the land of Egypt, that Pharaoh should receive one-fifth of all the crops grown on his land. Only the land belonging to the priests was not given to Pharaoh.

²⁷Meanwhile, the people of Israel settled in the region of Goshen in Egypt. There they acquired property, and they were fruitful, and their population grew rapidly. ²⁸Jacob lived for seventeen years after his arrival in Egypt, so he lived 147 years in all.

²⁹As the time of his death drew near, Jacob* called for his son Joseph and said to him, “Please do me this favor. Put your hand under my thigh and swear that you will treat me with unflinching love by honoring this last request: Do not bury me in Egypt. ³⁰When I die, please take my body out of Egypt and bury me with my ancestors.”

So Joseph promised, “I will do as you ask.”

³¹“Swear that you will do it,” Jacob insisted. So Joseph gave his oath, and Jacob bowed humbly at the head of his bed.*

46:1 Hebrew *Israel*; also in 46:29, 30. See note on 35:21. **46:3** Hebrew *I am El*. **46:13a** As in Syriac version and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also 1 Chr 7:1); Hebrew reads *Puvah*. **46:13b** As in some Greek manuscripts and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Num 26:24; 1 Chr 7:1); Hebrew reads *Job*. **46:16** As in Greek version and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Num 26:15); Hebrew reads *Ziphion*. **46:20** Greek version reads *of Heliopolis*. **46:27a** Greek version reads *nine sons*, probably including Joseph’s grandsons through Ephraim and Manasseh (see 1 Chr 7:14-20). **46:27b** Greek version reads *seventy-five*; see note on Exod 1:5. **47:21** As in Greek version and Samaritan Pentateuch; Hebrew reads *he moved them all into the towns*. **47:29** Hebrew *Israel*; also in 47:31b. See note on 35:21. **47:31** Greek version reads *Israel bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff*. Compare Heb 11:21.

MATTHEW 15:1-28

Some Pharisees and teachers of religious law now arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. They asked him, ²“Why do your disciples disobey our age-old tradition? For they ignore our tradition of ceremonial hand washing before they eat.”

³Jesus replied, “And why do you, by your traditions, violate the direct commandments of God? ⁴For instance, God says, ‘Honor your father and mother,’* and ‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.’* ⁵But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, ‘Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.’ ⁶In this way, you say they don’t need to honor their parents.* And so you cancel the word of God for the sake of your own tradition. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

⁸ ‘These people honor me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me.

⁹ Their worship is a farce,
for they teach man-made ideas
as commands from God.’*”

¹⁰Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “Listen,” he said,

“and try to understand. ¹¹It’s not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth.”

¹²Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you realize you offended the Pharisees by what you just said?”

¹³Jesus replied, “Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father will be uprooted, ¹⁴so ignore them. They are blind guides leading the blind, and if one blind person guides another, they will both fall into a ditch.”

¹⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, “Explain to us the parable that says people aren’t defiled by what they eat.”

¹⁶“Don’t you understand yet?” Jesus asked. ¹⁷“Anything you eat passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer. ¹⁸But the words you speak come from the heart—that’s what defiles you. ¹⁹For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. ²⁰These are what defile you. Eating with unwashed hands will never defile you.”

²¹Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

²²A Gentile* woman who lived there came to him, pleading, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is possessed by a demon that torments her severely.”

²³But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word. Then his disciples urged him to send her away. “Tell her to go away,” they said. “She is bothering us with all her begging.”

²⁴Then Jesus said to the woman, “I was sent only to help God’s lost sheep—the people of Israel.”

²⁵But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, “Lord, help me!”

²⁶Jesus responded, “It isn’t right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁷She replied, “That’s true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their masters’ table.”

²⁸“Dear woman,” Jesus said to her, “your faith is great. Your request is

granted.” And her daughter was instantly healed.

15:4a Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16. **15:4b** Exod 21:17 (Greek version); Lev 20:9 (Greek version). **15:6** Greek *their father*; other manuscripts read *their father or their mother*. **15:8-9** Isa 29:13 (Greek version). **15:22** Greek *Canaanite*.

PSALM 19:1-14

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- 1 The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
The skies display his craftsmanship.
- 2 Day after day they continue to speak;
night after night they make him known.
- 3 They speak without a sound or word;
their voice is never heard.*
- 4 Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,
and their words to all the world.
God has made a home in the heavens for the sun.
- 5 It bursts forth like a radiant bridegroom after his wedding.
It rejoices like a great athlete eager to run the race.
- 6 The sun rises at one end of the heavens
and follows its course to the other end.
Nothing can hide from its heat.
- 7 The instructions of the LORD are perfect,
reviving the soul.
The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
- 8 The commandments of the LORD are right,
bringing joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are clear,
giving insight for living.
- 9 Reverence for the LORD is pure,
lasting forever.
The laws of the LORD are true;
each one is fair.

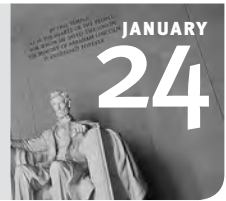
- 10 They are more desirable than gold,
even the finest gold.
They are sweeter than honey,
even honey dripping from the comb.
- 11 They are a warning to your servant,
a great reward for those who obey them.
- 12 How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart?
Cleanse me from these hidden faults.
- 13 Keep your servant from deliberate sins!
Don't let them control me.
Then I will be free of guilt
and innocent of great sin.
- 14 May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be pleasing to you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

19:3 Or *There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.*

PROVERBS 4:14-19

- 14 Don't do as the wicked do,
and don't follow the path of evildoers.
- 15 Don't even think about it; don't go that way.
Turn away and keep moving.
- 16 For evil people can't sleep until they've done their evil deed for the day.
They can't rest until they've caused someone to stumble.
- 17 They eat the food of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence!
- 18 The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn,
which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.
- 19 But the way of the wicked is like total darkness.
They have no idea what they are stumbling over.

Lord, Jacob's sons knew what their futures held—it was spelled out for them. We're less certain. Help us place our confidence in you, not just in our earthly leaders. Give us hearts tuned to your truth, not just to the day's headlines. Amen.



GENESIS 48:1–49:33

One day not long after this, word came to Joseph, “Your father is failing rapidly.” So Joseph went to visit his father, and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

²When Joseph arrived, Jacob was told, “Your son Joseph has come to see you.” So Jacob* gathered his strength and sat up in his bed.

³Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty* appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me. ⁴He said to me, ‘I will make you fruitful, and I will multiply your descendants. I will make you a multitude of nations. And I will give this land of Canaan to your descendants* after you as an everlasting possession.’

⁵“Now I am claiming as my own sons these two boys of yours, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born here in the land of Egypt before I arrived. They will be my sons, just as Reuben and Simeon are. ⁶But any children born to you in the future will be your own, and they will inherit land within the territories of their brothers Ephraim and Manasseh.

⁷“Long ago, as I was returning from Paddan-aram,* Rachel died in the land of Canaan. We were still on the way, some distance from Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). So with great sorrow I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath.”

⁸Then Jacob looked over at the two boys. “Are these your sons?” he asked.

⁹“Yes,” Joseph told him, “these are the sons God has given me here in Egypt.”

And Jacob said, “Bring them closer to me, so I can bless them.”

¹⁰Jacob was half blind because of his age and could hardly see. So

Joseph brought the boys close to him, and Jacob kissed and embraced them. ¹¹Then Jacob said to Joseph, “I never thought I would see your face again, but now God has let me see your children, too!”

¹²Joseph moved the boys, who were at their grandfather’s knees, and he bowed with his face to the ground. ¹³Then he positioned the boys in front of Jacob. With his right hand he directed Ephraim toward Jacob’s left hand, and with his left hand he put Manasseh at Jacob’s right hand. ¹⁴But Jacob crossed his arms as he reached out to lay his hands on the boys’ heads. He put his right hand on the head of Ephraim, though he was the younger boy, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, though he was the firstborn. ¹⁵Then he blessed Joseph and said,

“May the God before whom my grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac, walked—the God who has been my shepherd all my life, to this very day, ¹⁶ the Angel who has redeemed me from all harm— may he bless these boys. May they preserve my name and the names of Abraham and Isaac. And may their descendants multiply greatly throughout the earth.”

¹⁷But Joseph was upset when he saw that his father placed his right hand on Ephraim’s head. So Joseph lifted it to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸“No, my father,” he said. “This one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head.”

¹⁹But his father refused. “I know, my son; I know,” he replied. “Manasseh will also become a great people, but his younger brother will become even greater. And his descendants will become a multitude of nations.”

²⁰So Jacob blessed the boys that day with this blessing: “The people of Israel will use your names when they give a blessing. They will say, ‘May God make you as prosperous as Ephraim and Manasseh.’” In this way, Jacob put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

²¹Then Jacob said to Joseph, “Look, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will take you back to Canaan, the land of your ancestors. ²²And beyond what I have given your brothers, I am giving you an extra portion of the land* that I took from the Amorites with my sword and bow.”

^{49:1}Then Jacob called together all his sons and said, “Gather around me, and I will tell you what will happen to each of you in the days to come.

² “Come and listen, you sons of Jacob;
listen to Israel, your father.

³ “Reuben, you are my firstborn,
my strength,
the child of my vigorous youth.
You are first in rank and first
in power.

⁴ But you are as unruly as a flood,
and you will be first no longer.
For you went to bed with my wife;
you defiled my marriage couch.

⁵ “Simeon and Levi are two of a kind;
their weapons are instruments
of violence.

⁶ May I never join in their meetings;
may I never be a party to their
plans.
For in their anger they murdered
men,
and they crippled oxen just for
sport.

⁷ A curse on their anger, for it is
fierce;
a curse on their wrath, for it
is cruel.

I will scatter them among the
descendants of Jacob;
I will disperse them throughout
Israel.

⁸ “Judah, your brothers will praise
you.

You will grasp your enemies
by the neck.
All your relatives will bow
before you.

⁹ Judah, my son, is a young lion
that has finished eating its prey.
Like a lion he crouches and lies
down;
like a lioness—who dares to
rouse him?

¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from
Judah,
nor the ruler’s staff from his
descendants,*
until the coming of the one to
whom it belongs,*
the one whom all nations will
honor.

¹¹ He ties his foal to a grapevine,
the colt of his donkey to a choice
vine.

He washes his clothes in wine,
his robes in the blood of grapes.

¹² His eyes are darker than wine,
and his teeth are whiter than
milk.

¹³ “Zebulun will settle by the
seashore
and will be a harbor for ships;
his borders will extend to Sidon.

¹⁴ “Issachar is a sturdy donkey,
resting between two
saddlepacks.*

¹⁵ When he sees how good the
countryside is
and how pleasant the land,
he will bend his shoulder to the
load
and submit himself to hard
labor.

¹⁶ “Dan will govern his people,
like any other tribe in Israel.

¹⁷ Dan will be a snake beside the
road,
a poisonous viper along the
path

- that bites the horse's hooves
so its rider is thrown off.
- 18 I trust in you for salvation, O LORD!
- 19 "Gad will be attacked by
marauding bands,
but he will attack them when
they retreat.
- 20 "Asher will dine on rich foods
and produce food fit for kings.
- 21 "Naphtali is a doe set free
that bears beautiful fawns.
- 22 "Joseph is the foal of a wild donkey,
the foal of a wild donkey at a
spring—
one of the wild donkeys on the
ridge.*
- 23 Archers attacked him savagely;
they shot at him and harassed
him.
- 24 But his bow remained taut,
and his arms were strengthened
by the hands of the Mighty One of
Jacob,
by the Shepherd, the Rock of
Israel.
- 25 May the God of your father help
you;
may the Almighty bless you
with the blessings of the heavens
above,
and blessings of the watery
depths below,
and blessings of the breasts and
womb.
- 26 May my fatherly blessings on you
surpass the blessings of my
ancestors,*
reaching to the heights of the
eternal hills.
May these blessings rest on the
head of Joseph,
who is a prince among his
brothers.
- 27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf,
devouring his enemies in the
morning
and dividing his plunder in the
evening."

28 These are the twelve tribes of
Israel, and this is what their father
said as he told his sons good-bye. He

blessed each one with an appropriate
message.

29 Then Jacob instructed them,
"Soon I will die and join my ances-
tors. Bury me with my father and
grandfather in the cave in the field of
Ephron the Hittite. 30 This is the cave
in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre
in Canaan, that Abraham bought from
Ephron the Hittite as a permanent
burial site. 31 There Abraham and his
wife Sarah are buried. There Isaac and
his wife, Rebekah, are buried. And
there I buried Leah. 32 It is the plot of
land and the cave that my grandfather
Abraham bought from the Hittites."

33 When Jacob had finished this
charge to his sons, he drew his feet
into the bed, breathed his last, and
joined his ancestors in death.

48:2 Hebrew *Israel*; also in 48:8, 10, 11, 13, 14,
21. See note on 35:21. 48:3 Hebrew *El-Shaddai*.
48:4 Hebrew *seed*; also in 48:19. 48:7 Hebrew
Paddan, referring to Paddan-aram; compare Gen
35:9. 48:22 Or *an extra ridge of land*. The meaning
of the Hebrew is uncertain. 49:10a Hebrew *from
between his feet*. 49:10b Or *until tribute is brought
to him and the peoples obey*; traditionally rendered
until Shiloh comes. 49:14 Or *sheepfolds, or hearths*.
49:22 Or *Joseph is a fruitful tree, / a fruitful tree
beside a spring. / His branches reach over the wall*.
The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. 49:26 Or
of the ancient mountains.

MATTHEW 15:29–16:12

Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee
and climbed a hill and sat down. 30 A
vast crowd brought to him people who
were lame, blind, crippled, those who
couldn't speak, and many others. They
laid them before Jesus, and he healed
them all. 31 The crowd was amazed!
Those who hadn't been able to speak
were talking, the crippled were made
well, the lame were walking, and
the blind could see again! And they
praised the God of Israel.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples
and told them, "I feel sorry for these
people. They have been here with me
for three days, and they have nothing
left to eat. I don't want to send them
away hungry, or they will faint along
the way."

33 The disciples replied, "Where
would we get enough food here in the
wilderness for such a huge crowd?"

³⁴Jesus asked, “How much bread do you have?”

They replied, “Seven loaves, and a few small fish.”

³⁵So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. ³⁶Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to the disciples, who distributed the food to the crowd.

³⁷They all ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. ³⁸There were 4,000 men who were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children. ³⁹Then Jesus sent the people home, and he got into a boat and crossed over to the region of Magadan.

^{16:1}One day the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus, demanding that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.

²He replied, “You know the saying, ‘Red sky at night means fair weather tomorrow; ³red sky in the morning means foul weather all day.’ You know how to interpret the weather signs in the sky, but you don’t know how to interpret the signs of the times!* ⁴Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign, but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah.*” Then Jesus left them and went away.

⁵Later, after they crossed to the other side of the lake, the disciples discovered they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶“Watch out!” Jesus warned them. “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

⁷At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn’t brought any bread. ⁸Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said, “You have so little faith! Why are you arguing with each other about having no bread? ⁹Don’t you understand even yet? Don’t you remember the 5,000 I fed with five loaves, and the baskets of leftovers you picked up? ¹⁰Or the 4,000 I fed with seven loaves, and the large baskets of leftovers you picked

up? ¹¹Why can’t you understand that I’m not talking about bread? So again I say, ‘Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’”

¹²Then at last they understood that he wasn’t speaking about the yeast in bread, but about the deceptive teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

16:2-3 Several manuscripts do not include any of the words in 16:2-3 after *He replied*. **16:4** Greek *the sign of Jonah*.

PSALM 20:1-9

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- ¹ In times of trouble, may the LORD answer your cry.
May the name of the God of Jacob keep you safe from all harm.
- ² May he send you help from his sanctuary and strengthen you from Jerusalem.*
- ³ May he remember all your gifts and look favorably on your burnt offerings. *Interlude*
- ⁴ May he grant your heart’s desires and make all your plans succeed.
- ⁵ May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory and raise a victory banner in the name of our God.
May the LORD answer all your prayers.
- ⁶ Now I know that the LORD rescues his anointed king.
He will answer him from his holy heaven and rescue him by his great power.
- ⁷ Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the LORD our God.
- ⁸ Those nations will fall down and collapse, but we will rise up and stand firm.
- ⁹ Give victory to our king, O LORD!
Answer our cry for help.

20:2 Hebrew *Zion*.

PROVERBS 4:20-27

²⁰ My child, pay attention to what I say.

Listen carefully to my words.

²¹ Don't lose sight of them.

Let them penetrate deep into your heart,

²² for they bring life to those who find them,

and healing to their whole body.

²³ Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

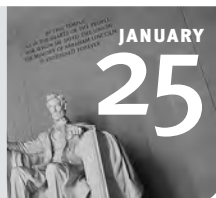
²⁴ Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech.

²⁵ Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you.

²⁶ Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path.

²⁷ Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

Lord, it was leaders who plotted against Jesus, who rallied people against their one true hope. Protect our nation from leaders who point us in the wrong direction. Protect us from choosing poorly whom we'll follow. Amen.

**GENESIS 50:1—EXODUS 2:10**

Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed him. ²Then Joseph told the physicians who served him to embalm his father's body; so Jacob* was embalmed. ³The embalming process took the usual forty days. And the Egyptians mourned his death for seventy days.

⁴When the period of mourning was over, Joseph approached Pharaoh's advisers and said, "Please do me this favor and speak to Pharaoh on my behalf. ⁵Tell him that my father made me swear an oath. He said to me, 'Listen, I am about to die. Take my body back to the land of Canaan, and bury me in the tomb I prepared for myself.' So please allow me to go and bury my father. After his burial, I will return without delay."

⁶Pharaoh agreed to Joseph's request. "Go and bury your father, as he made you promise," he said. ⁷So Joseph went up to bury his father. He was accompanied by all of Pharaoh's officials, all the senior members of Pharaoh's household, and all the senior officers of Egypt. ⁸Joseph also took his entire household and his brothers and their households.

But they left their little children and flocks and herds in the land of Goshen. ⁹A great number of chariots and charioteers accompanied Joseph.

¹⁰When they arrived at the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan River, they held a very great and solemn memorial service, with a seven-day period of mourning for Joseph's father. ¹¹The local residents, the Canaanites, watched them mourning at the threshing floor of Atad. Then they renamed that place (which is near the Jordan) Abel-mizraim,* for they said, "This is a place of deep mourning for these Egyptians."

¹²So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them. ¹³They carried his body to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre. This is the cave that Abraham had bought as a permanent burial site from Ephron the Hittite.

¹⁴After burying Jacob, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had accompanied him to his father's burial. ¹⁵But now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers became fearful. "Now Joseph will show his anger and pay us back for all the wrong we did to him," they said.

¹⁶So they sent this message to Joseph: “Before your father died, he instructed us ¹⁷to say to you: ‘Please forgive your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly.’ So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive our sin.” When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. ¹⁸Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. “Look, we are your slaves!” they said.

¹⁹But Joseph replied, “Don’t be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? ²⁰You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. ²¹No, don’t be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children.” So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them.

²²So Joseph and his brothers and their families continued to live in Egypt. Joseph lived to the age of 110. ²³He lived to see three generations of descendants of his son Ephraim, and he lived to see the birth of the children of Manasseh’s son Makir, whom he claimed as his own.*

²⁴“Soon I will die,” Joseph told his brothers, “but God will surely come to help you and lead you out of this land of Egypt. He will bring you back to the land he solemnly promised to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

²⁵Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath, and he said, “When God comes to help you and lead you back, you must take my bones with you.” ²⁶So Joseph died at the age of 110. The Egyptians embalmed him, and his body was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

^{1:1}These are the names of the sons of Israel (that is, Jacob) who moved to Egypt with their father, each with his family: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, ³Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, ⁴Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. ⁵In all, Jacob had seventy* descendants in Egypt, including Joseph, who was already there.

⁶In time, Joseph and all of his broth-

ers died, ending that entire generation. ⁷But their descendants, the Israelites, had many children and grandchildren. In fact, they multiplied so greatly that they became extremely powerful and filled the land.

⁸Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done. ⁹He said to his people, “Look, the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we are. ¹⁰We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more. If we don’t, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country.*”

¹¹So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply centers for the king. ¹²But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became. ¹³So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. ¹⁴They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands.

¹⁵Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: ¹⁶“When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver.* If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.” ¹⁷But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king’s orders. They allowed the boys to live, too.

¹⁸So the king of Egypt called for the midwives. “Why have you done this?” he demanded. “Why have you allowed the boys to live?”

¹⁹“The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women,” the midwives replied. “They are more vigorous and have their babies so quickly that we cannot get there in time.”

²⁰So God was good to the midwives,

and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful. ²¹And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²²Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live.”

²¹About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got married.

²The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months. ³But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River. ⁴The baby’s sister then stood at a distance, watching to see what would happen to him.

⁵Soon Pharaoh’s daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her attendants walked along the riverbank. When the princess saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it for her. ⁶When the princess opened it, she saw the baby. The little boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “This must be one of the Hebrew children,” she said.

⁷Then the baby’s sister approached the princess. “Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?” she asked.

⁸“Yes, do!” the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby’s mother.

⁹“Take this baby and nurse him for me,” the princess told the baby’s mother. “I will pay you for your help.” So the woman took her baby home and nursed him.

¹⁰Later, when the boy was older, his mother brought him back to Pharaoh’s daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess named him Moses,* for she explained, “I lifted him out of the water.”

50:2 Hebrew *Israel*. See note on 35:21.

50:11 *Abel-mizraim* means “mourning of the Egyptians.” **50:23** Hebrew *who were born on*

Joseph’s knees. **1:5** Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read *seventy-five*; see notes on Gen 46:27. **1:10** Or *will take the country*. **1:16** Hebrew *look upon the two stones*; perhaps the reference is to a birthstool. **2:10** *Moses* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to lift out.”

MATTHEW 16:13–17:9

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”*

¹⁴“Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.”

¹⁵Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah,* the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John,* because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. ¹⁸Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’),* and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell* will not conquer it. ¹⁹And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid* on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit* on earth will be permitted in heaven.”

²⁰Then he sternly warned the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

²¹From then on Jesus* began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.

²²But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him* for saying such things. “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen to you!”

²³Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”

²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. ²⁶And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?* Is anything worth more than your soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. ²⁸And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.”

^{17:1}Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. ²As the men watched, Jesus’ appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. ³Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter exclaimed, “Lord, it’s wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I’ll make three shelters as memorials*—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

⁵But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him.” ⁶The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.

⁷Then Jesus came over and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” ⁸And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

⁹As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man* has been raised from the dead.”

16:13 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself. **16:16** Or *the Christ. Messiah* (a Hebrew term) and *Christ* (a Greek term) both mean “anointed one.” **16:17** Greek *Simon bar-Jonah*; see John 1:42; 21:15-17. **16:18a** Greek *that you are Peter*. **16:18b** Greek *and the gates of Hades*. **16:19a** Or *bind, or lock*. **16:19b** Or *loose, or open*. **16:21** Some manuscripts

read *Jesus the Messiah*. **16:22** Or *began to correct him*. **16:26** Or *your self?* also in 16:26b. **17:4** Greek *three tabernacles*. **17:9** “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

PSALM 21:1-13

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

- 1 How the king rejoices in your strength, O LORD!
He shouts with joy because you give him victory.
- 2 For you have given him his heart’s desire;
you have withheld nothing he requested. *Interlude*
- 3 You welcomed him back with success and prosperity.
You placed a crown of finest gold on his head.
- 4 He asked you to preserve his life, and you granted his request.
The days of his life stretch on forever.
- 5 Your victory brings him great honor, and you have clothed him with splendor and majesty.
- 6 You have endowed him with eternal blessings and given him the joy of your presence.
- 7 For the king trusts in the LORD.
The unfailing love of the Most High will keep him from stumbling.
- 8 You will capture all your enemies.
Your strong right hand will seize all who hate you.
- 9 You will throw them in a flaming furnace when you appear.
The LORD will consume them in his anger;
fire will devour them.
- 10 You will wipe their children from the face of the earth;
they will never have descendants.
- 11 Although they plot against you, their evil schemes will never succeed.
- 12 For they will turn and run when they see your arrows aimed at them.

¹³ Rise up, O LORD, in all your power.
With music and singing we
celebrate your mighty acts.

PROVERBS 5:1-6

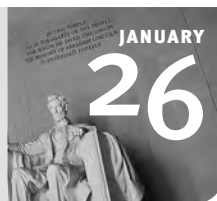
¹ My son, pay attention to my
wisdom;
listen carefully to my wise
counsel.
² Then you will show discernment,
and your lips will express what
you've learned.
³ For the lips of an immoral woman
are as sweet as honey,

and her mouth is smoother
than oil.

⁴ But in the end she is as bitter as
poison,
as dangerous as a double-edged
sword.
⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the
grave.*
⁶ For she cares nothing about the
path to life.
She staggers down a crooked
trail and doesn't realize it.

5:5 Hebrew to Sheol.

*Lord, thank you for empowering Moses to take a deep
breath and then tell Pharaoh to set your people free. Give
our leaders the courage to speak truth to power too. Amen.*



EXODUS 2:11-3:22

Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were forced to work. During his visit, he saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews. ¹²After looking in all directions to make sure no one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand.

¹³The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he saw two Hebrew men fighting. “Why are you beating up your friend?” Moses said to the one who had started the fight.

¹⁴The man replied, “Who appointed you to be our prince and judge? Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?”

Then Moses was afraid, thinking, “Everyone knows what I did.” ¹⁵And sure enough, Pharaoh heard what had happened, and he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian.

When Moses arrived in Midian, he sat down beside a well. ¹⁶Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters who came as usual to draw water and

fill the water troughs for their father's flocks. ¹⁷But some other shepherds came and chased them away. So Moses jumped up and rescued the girls from the shepherds. Then he drew water for their flocks.

¹⁸When the girls returned to Reuel, their father, he asked, “Why are you back so soon today?”

¹⁹“An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds,” they answered. “And then he drew water for us and watered our flocks.”

²⁰“Then where is he?” their father asked. “Why did you leave him there? Invite him to come and eat with us.”

²¹Moses accepted the invitation, and he settled there with him. In time, Reuel gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to be his wife. ²²Later she gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom,* for he explained, “I have been a foreigner in a foreign land.”

²³Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God. ²⁴God heard their groaning, and he remembered

his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁵He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.*

^{3:1}One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro,* the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai,* the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. ³"This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

⁴When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am!" Moses replied.

⁵"Do not come any closer," the LORD warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. ⁶I am the God of your father*—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷Then the LORD told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. ⁸So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. ⁹Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. ¹⁰Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt."

¹¹But Moses protested to God, "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

¹²God answered, "I will be with

you. And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain."

¹³But Moses protested, "If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what should I tell them?"

¹⁴God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.* Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you." ¹⁵God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh,* the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.

This is my eternal name,
my name to remember for all
generations.

¹⁶"Now go and call together all the elders of Israel. Tell them, 'Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—has appeared to me. He told me, "I have been watching closely, and I see how the Egyptians are treating you. ¹⁷I have promised to rescue you from your oppression in Egypt. I will lead you to a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.'"

¹⁸"The elders of Israel will accept your message. Then you and the elders must go to the king of Egypt and tell him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So please let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD, our God.'

¹⁹"But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand forces him.* ²⁰So I will raise my hand and strike the Egyptians, performing all kinds of miracles among them. Then at last he will let you go. ²¹And I will cause the Egyptians to look favorably on you. They will give you gifts when you go so you will not leave empty-handed. ²²Every Israelite

woman will ask for articles of silver and gold and fine clothing from her Egyptian neighbors and from the foreign women in their houses. You will dress your sons and daughters with these, stripping the Egyptians of their wealth.”

2:22 *Gershom* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “a foreigner there.” **2:25** Or *and acknowledged his obligation to help them.* **3:1a** Moses’ father-in-law went by two names, Jethro and Reuel. **3:1b** Hebrew *Horeb*, another name for Sinai. **3:6** Greek version reads *your fathers.* **3:14** Or *I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE.* **3:15** *Yahweh* (also in 3:16) is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH* that is sometimes rendered “Jehovah”; in this translation it is usually rendered “the LORD” (note the use of small capitals). **3:19** As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *will not let you go, not by a mighty hand.*

MATTHEW 17:10-27

Then his disciples asked him, “Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?”

¹¹Jesus replied, “Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything ready. ¹²But I tell you, Elijah has already come, but he wasn’t recognized, and they chose to abuse him. And in the same way they will also make the Son of Man suffer.” ¹³Then the disciples realized he was talking about John the Baptist.

¹⁴At the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them. A man came and knelt before Jesus and said, ¹⁵“Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. ¹⁶So I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn’t heal him.”

¹⁷Jesus said, “You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.” ¹⁸Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. From that moment the boy was well.

¹⁹Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, “Why couldn’t we cast out that demon?”

²⁰“You don’t have enough faith,” Jesus told them. “I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’

and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.*”

²²After they gathered again in Galilee, Jesus told them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. ²³He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.” And the disciples were filled with grief.

²⁴On their arrival in Capernaum, the collectors of the Temple tax* came to Peter and asked him, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the Temple tax?”

²⁵“Yes, he does,” Peter replied. Then he went into the house.

But before he had a chance to speak, Jesus asked him, “What do you think, Peter? Do kings tax their own people or the people they have conquered?”

²⁶“They tax the people they have conquered,” Peter replied.

“Well, then,” Jesus said, “the citizens are free! ²⁷However, we don’t want to offend them, so go down to the lake and throw in a line. Open the mouth of the first fish you catch, and you will find a large silver coin.* Take it and pay the tax for both of us.”

17:10 Greek *that Elijah must come first?* **17:20** Some manuscripts add verse 21, *But this kind of demon won’t leave except by prayer and fasting.* Compare Mark 9:29. **17:24** Greek *the two-drachma [tax];* also in 17:24b. See Exod 30:13-16; Neh 10:32-33.

17:25a Greek *Simon?* **17:25b** Greek *their sons or others?* **17:27** Greek *a stater* [a Greek coin equivalent to four drachmas].

PSALM 22:1-18

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune “Doe of the Dawn.”

- 1 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
Why are you so far away when I groan for help?
- 2 Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.
Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.
- 3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our ancestors trusted in you,
and you rescued them.
- 5 They cried out to you and were saved.

They trusted in you and were never disgraced.

6 But I am a worm and not a man.
I am scorned and despised by all!

7 Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying,

8 “Is this the one who relies on the LORD?
Then let the LORD save him!
If the LORD loves him so much, let the LORD rescue him!”

9 Yet you brought me safely from my mother’s womb and led me to trust you at my mother’s breast.

10 I was thrust into your arms at my birth.
You have been my God from the moment I was born.

11 Do not stay so far from me, for trouble is near, and no one else can help me.

12 My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls;
fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in!

13 Like lions they open their jaws against me,
roaring and tearing into their prey.

14 My life is poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart is like wax, melting within me.

15 My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay.
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.
You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead.

16 My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs;
an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced* my hands and feet.

17 I can count all my bones.
My enemies stare at me and gloat.

18 They divide my garments among themselves
and throw dice* for my clothing.

22:16 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions; most Hebrew manuscripts read *They are like a lion at.* **22:18** Hebrew *cast lots.*

PROVERBS 5:7-14

7 So now, my sons, listen to me.
Never stray from what I am about to say:

8 Stay away from her!
Don’t go near the door of her house!

9 If you do, you will lose your honor and will lose to merciless people all you have achieved.

10 Strangers will consume your wealth,
and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor.

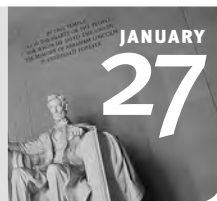
11 In the end you will groan in anguish
when disease consumes your body.

12 You will say, “How I hated discipline!
If only I had not ignored all the warnings!

13 Oh, why didn’t I listen to my teachers?
Why didn’t I pay attention to my instructors?

14 I have come to the brink of utter ruin,
and now I must face public disgrace.”

Lord, help us to get over ourselves, to see past our own desires so we can embrace what's best for our nation. I pray that, throughout our land, we will see past the partisan and worry less about ourselves and more about others. Amen.



EXODUS 4:1-5:21

But Moses protested again, “What if they won’t believe me or listen to me? What if they say, ‘The LORD never appeared to you?’”

²Then the LORD asked him, “What is that in your hand?”

“A shepherd’s staff,” Moses replied.

³“Throw it down on the ground,” the LORD told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back.

⁴Then the LORD told him, “Reach out and grab its tail.” So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd’s staff in his hand.

⁵“Perform this sign,” the LORD told him. “Then they will believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to you.”

⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now put your hand inside your cloak.” So Moses put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out again, his hand was white as snow with a severe skin disease.* ⁷“Now put your hand back into your cloak,” the LORD said. So Moses put his hand back in, and when he took it out again, it was as healthy as the rest of his body.

⁸The LORD said to Moses, “If they do not believe you and are not convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by the second sign. ⁹And if they don’t believe you or listen to you even after these two signs, then take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry ground. When you do, the water from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground.”

¹⁰But Moses pleaded with the LORD, “O Lord, I’m not very good with words.

I never have been, and I’m not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.”

¹¹Then the LORD asked Moses, “Who makes a person’s mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹²Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.”

¹³But Moses again pleaded, “Lord, please! Send anyone else.”

¹⁴Then the LORD became angry with Moses. “All right,” he said. “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well. And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted to see you. ¹⁵Talk to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what to do. ¹⁶Aaron will be your spokesman to the people. He will be your mouthpiece, and you will stand in the place of God for him, telling him what to say. ¹⁷And take your shepherd’s staff with you, and use it to perform the miraculous signs I have shown you.”

¹⁸So Moses went back home to Jethro, his father-in-law. “Please let me return to my relatives in Egypt,” Moses said. “I don’t even know if they are still alive.”

“Go in peace,” Jethro replied.

¹⁹Before Moses left Midian, the LORD said to him, “Return to Egypt, for all those who wanted to kill you have died.”

²⁰So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey, and headed back to the land of Egypt. In his hand he carried the staff of God.

²¹And the LORD told Moses, “When you arrive back in Egypt, go to Pharaoh and perform all the miracles I

have empowered you to do. But I will harden his heart so he will refuse to let the people go. ²²Then you will tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son. ²³I commanded you, "Let my son go, so he can worship me." But since you have refused, I will now kill your firstborn son!"

²⁴On the way to Egypt, at a place where Moses and his family had stopped for the night, the LORD confronted him and was about to kill him. ²⁵But Moses' wife, Zipporah, took a flint knife and circumcised her son. She touched his feet* with the foreskin and said, "Now you are a bridegroom of blood to me." ²⁶(When she said "a bridegroom of blood," she was referring to the circumcision.) After that, the LORD left him alone.

²⁷Now the LORD had said to Aaron, "Go out into the wilderness to meet Moses." So Aaron went and met Moses at the mountain of God, and he embraced him. ²⁸Moses then told Aaron everything the LORD had commanded him to say. And he told him about the miraculous signs the LORD had commanded him to perform.

²⁹Then Moses and Aaron returned to Egypt and called all the elders of Israel together. ³⁰Aaron told them everything the LORD had told Moses, and Moses performed the miraculous signs as they watched. ³¹Then the people of Israel were convinced that the LORD had sent Moses and Aaron. When they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

^{5:1}After this presentation to Israel's leaders, Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness."

²"Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the LORD? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go."

³But Aaron and Moses persisted. "The God of the Hebrews has met with us," they declared. "So let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness so we can offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. If we don't, he will kill us with a plague or with the sword."

⁴Pharaoh replied, "Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work! ⁵Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work."

⁶That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen: ⁷"Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves! ⁸But still require them to make the same number of bricks as before. Don't reduce the quota. They are lazy. That's why they are crying out, 'Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.' ⁹Load them down with more work. Make them sweat! That will teach them to listen to lies!"

¹⁰So the slave drivers and foremen went out and told the people: "This is what Pharaoh says: I will not provide any more straw for you. ¹¹Go and get it yourselves. Find it wherever you can. But you must produce just as many bricks as before!" ¹²So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt in search of stubble to use as straw.

¹³Meanwhile, the Egyptian slave drivers continued to push hard. "Meet your daily quota of bricks, just as you did when we provided you with straw!" they demanded. ¹⁴Then they whipped the Israelite foremen they had put in charge of the work crews. "Why haven't you met your quotas either yesterday or today?" they demanded.

¹⁵So the Israelite foremen went to Pharaoh and pleaded with him. "Please don't treat your servants like this," they begged. ¹⁶"We are given no straw, but the slave drivers still demand, 'Make bricks!' We are being beaten, but it isn't our fault! Your own people are to blame!"

¹⁷But Pharaoh shouted, "You're just

lazy! Lazy! That's why you're saying, 'Let us go and offer sacrifices to the LORD.' ¹⁸Now get back to work! No straw will be given to you, but you must still produce the full quota of bricks."

¹⁹The Israelite foremen could see that they were in serious trouble when they were told, "You must not reduce the number of bricks you make each day." ²⁰As they left Pharaoh's court, they confronted Moses and Aaron, who were waiting outside for them. ²¹The foremen said to them, "May the LORD judge and punish you for making us stink before Pharaoh and his officials. You have put a sword into their hands, an excuse to kill us!"

4:6 Or with leprosy. The Hebrew word used here can describe various skin diseases. **4:25** The Hebrew word for "feet" may refer here to the male sex organ.

MATTHEW 18:1-20

About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

²Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. ³Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. ⁴So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

⁵"And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf* is welcoming me. ⁶But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

⁷"What sorrow awaits the world, because it tempts people to sin. Temptations are inevitable, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting. ⁸So if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand or one foot than to be thrown into eternal fire with both of your hands and feet. ⁹And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and

throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.*

¹⁰"Beware that you don't look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father.*

¹²"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? ¹³And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away! ¹⁴In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish.

¹⁵"If another believer* sins against you,* go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. ¹⁶But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

¹⁸"I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid* on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit* on earth will be permitted in heaven.

¹⁹"I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. ²⁰For where two or three gather together as my followers,* I am there among them."

18:5 Greek in my name. **18:9** Greek the Gehenna of fire. **18:10** Some manuscripts add verse 11, *And the Son of Man came to save those who are lost.* Compare Luke 19:10. **18:15a** Greek *If your brother.* **18:15b** Some manuscripts do not include *against you.* **18:18a** Or bind, or lock. **18:18b** Or loose, or open. **18:20** Greek *gather together in my name.*

PSALM 22:19-31

¹⁹ O LORD, do not stay far away!
You are my strength; come quickly to my aid!

- 20 Save me from the sword;
spare my precious life from
these dogs.
- 21 Snatch me from the lion's jaws
and from the horns of these
wild oxen.
- 22 I will proclaim your name to my
brothers and sisters.*
I will praise you among your
assembled people.
- 23 Praise the LORD, all you who fear
him!
Honor him, all you
descendants of Jacob!
Show him reverence, all you
descendants of Israel!
- 24 For he has not ignored or belittled
the suffering of the needy.
He has not turned his back on
them,
but has listened to their cries
for help.
- 25 I will praise you in the great
assembly.
I will fulfill my vows in the
presence of those who
worship you.
- 26 The poor will eat and be satisfied.
All who seek the LORD will
praise him.
Their hearts will rejoice with
everlasting joy.
- 27 The whole earth will acknowledge
the LORD and return to him.
All the families of the nations
will bow down before him.
- 28 For royal power belongs to the
LORD.
He rules all the nations.
- 29 Let the rich of the earth feast
and worship.

- Bow before him, all who are
mortal,
all whose lives will end
as dust.
- 30 Our children will also serve him.
Future generations will hear
about the wonders of the Lord.
- 31 His righteous acts will be told to
those not yet born.
They will hear about everything
he has done.

22:22 Hebrew *my brothers*.

PROVERBS 5:15-21

- 15 Drink water from your own well—
share your love only with your
wife.*
- 16 Why spill the water of your springs
in the streets,
having sex with just anyone?*
- 17 You should reserve it for
yourselves.
Never share it with strangers.
- 18 Let your wife be a fountain of
blessing for you.
Rejoice in the wife of your youth.
- 19 She is a loving deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts satisfy you
always.
May you always be captivated
by her love.
- 20 Why be captivated, my son, by an
immoral woman,
or fondle the breasts of a
promiscuous woman?
- 21 For the LORD sees clearly what a
man does,
examining every path he takes.

5:15 Hebrew *Drink water from your own cistern, / flowing water from your own well.* 5:16 Hebrew *Why spill your springs in the streets, / your streams in the city squares?*

Lord, you stood with Moses when he felt overwhelmed, and you'll stand with any leader who leans on you. I pray that our leaders—from our mayors to our governors to the president—will do just that. Give them the humility to know they need you. Amen.



EXODUS 5:22-7:25

Then Moses went back to the LORD and protested, “Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord? Why did you send me? ²³Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman, he has been even more brutal to your people. And you have done nothing to rescue them!”

^{6:1}Then the LORD told Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. When he feels the force of my strong hand, he will let the people go. In fact, he will force them to leave his land!”

²And God said to Moses, “I am Yahweh—‘the LORD.’* ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty’*—but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them. ⁴And I reaffirmed my covenant with them. Under its terms, I promised to give them the land of Canaan, where they were living as foreigners. ⁵You can be sure that I have heard the groans of the people of Israel, who are now slaves to the Egyptians. And I am well aware of my covenant with them.

⁶“Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the LORD. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. ⁷I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt. ⁸I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the LORD!’”

⁹So Moses told the people of Israel what the LORD had said, but they refused to listen anymore. They had

become too discouraged by the brutality of their slavery.

¹⁰Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹¹“Go back to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and tell him to let the people of Israel leave his country.”

¹²“But LORD!” Moses objected. “My own people won’t listen to me anymore. How can I expect Pharaoh to listen? I’m such a clumsy speaker!”

¹³But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them orders for the Israelites and for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The LORD commanded Moses and Aaron to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

¹⁴These are the ancestors of some of the clans of Israel:

The sons of Reuben, Israel’s oldest son, were Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. Their descendants became the clans of Reuben.

¹⁵The sons of Simeon were Gemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul’s mother was a Canaanite woman.) Their descendants became the clans of Simeon.

¹⁶These are the descendants of Levi, as listed in their family records: The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. (Levi lived to be 137 years old.)

¹⁷The descendants of Gershon included Libni and Shimei, each of whom became the ancestor of a clan.

¹⁸The descendants of Kohath included Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. (Kohath lived to be 133 years old.)

¹⁹The descendants of Merari included Mahli and Mushi.

These are the clans of the Levites, as listed in their family records.

²⁰Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, and she gave birth to his sons, Aaron and Moses. (Amram lived to be 137 years old.)

²¹The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zicri.

²²The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

²³Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she gave birth to his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

²⁴The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. Their descendants became the clans of Korah.

²⁵Eleazar son of Aaron married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she gave birth to his son, Phinehas. These are the ancestors of the Levite families, listed according to their clans.

²⁶The Aaron and Moses named in this list are the same ones to whom the LORD said, "Lead the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt like an army." ²⁷It was Moses and Aaron who spoke to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, about leading the people of Israel out of Egypt.

²⁸When the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, ²⁹he said to him, "I am the LORD! Tell Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, everything I am telling you." ³⁰But Moses argued with the LORD, saying, "I can't do it! I'm such a clumsy speaker! Why should Pharaoh listen to me?"

^{7:1}Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pay close attention to this. I will make you seem like God to Pharaoh, and your brother, Aaron, will be your prophet.

²Tell Aaron everything I command you, and Aaron must command Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave his country. ³But I will make Pharaoh's heart stubborn so I can multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴Even then Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you. So I will bring down my fist on Egypt. Then I will rescue my forces—my people,

the Israelites—from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. ⁵When I raise my powerful hand and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD."

⁶So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. ⁷Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron was eighty-three when they made their demands to Pharaoh.

⁸Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹"Pharaoh will demand, 'Show me a miracle.' When he does this, say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh, and it will become a serpent.*'"

¹⁰So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did what the LORD had commanded them. Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a serpent! ¹¹Then Pharaoh called in his own wise men and sorcerers, and these Egyptian magicians did the same thing with their magic. ¹²They threw down their staffs, which also became serpents! But then Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. ¹³Pharaoh's heart, however, remained hard. He still refused to listen, just as the LORD had predicted.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn,* and he still refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵So go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes down to the river. Stand on the bank of the Nile and meet him there. Be sure to take along the staff that turned into a snake. ¹⁶Then announce to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to tell you, "Let my people go, so they can worship me in the wilderness." Until now, you have refused to listen to him. ¹⁷So this is what the LORD says: "I will show you that I am the LORD." Look! I will strike the water of the Nile with this staff in my hand, and the river will turn to blood. ¹⁸The fish in it will die, and the river will stink. The Egyptians will not be able to drink any water from the Nile.'"

¹⁹Then the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and raise your hand over the waters of Egypt—all its rivers, canals, ponds, and all the

reservoirs. Turn all the water to blood. Everywhere in Egypt the water will turn to blood, even the water stored in wooden bowls and stone pots.”

²⁰So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them. As Pharaoh and all of his officials watched, Aaron raised his staff and struck the water of the Nile. Suddenly, the whole river turned to blood! ²¹The fish in the river died, and the water became so foul that the Egyptians couldn't drink it. There was blood everywhere throughout the land of Egypt. ²²But again the magicians of Egypt used their magic, and they, too, turned water into blood. So Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted. ²³Pharaoh returned to his palace and put the whole thing out of his mind. ²⁴Then all the Egyptians dug along the riverbank to find drinking water, for they couldn't drink the water from the Nile.

²⁵Seven days passed from the time the LORD struck the Nile.

6:2 *Yahweh* is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH* that is sometimes rendered “Jehovah”; in this translation it is usually rendered “the LORD” (note the use of small capitals). **6:3** *El-Shaddai*, which means “God Almighty,” is the name for God used in Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3. **6:12** Hebrew *I have uncircumcised lips*; also in 6:30. **7:9** Hebrew *tannin*, which elsewhere refers to a sea monster. Greek version translates it “dragon.” **7:14** Hebrew *heavy*.

MATTHEW 18:21–19:12

Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone* who sins against me? Seven times?”

²²“No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!”

²³“Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. ²⁴In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.* ²⁵He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

²⁶“But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please,

be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’” ²⁷Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

²⁸“But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars.* He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

²⁹“His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. ³⁰But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

³¹“When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³²Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

³⁵“That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters* from your heart.”

^{19:1}When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went down to the region of Judea east of the Jordan River. ²Large crowds followed him there, and he healed their sick.

³Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: “Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?”

⁴“Haven't you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’*” ⁵And he said, “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.*” ⁶Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.”

⁷“Then why did Moses say in the

law that a man could give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away?”* they asked.

⁸Jesus replied, “Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended. ⁹And I tell you this, whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery—unless his wife has been unfaithful.*”

¹⁰Jesus’ disciples then said to him, “If this is the case, it is better not to marry!”

¹¹“Not everyone can accept this statement,” Jesus said. “Only those whom God helps. ¹²Some are born as eunuchs, some have been made eunuchs by others, and some choose not to marry* for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.”

18:21 Greek *my brother*. **18:22** Or *seventy-seven times*. **18:24** Greek *10,000 talents* [375 tons or 340 metric tons of silver]. **18:28** Greek *100 denarii*. A denarius was equivalent to a laborer’s full day’s wage. **18:35** Greek *your brother*. **19:4** Gen 1:27; 5:2. **19:5** Gen 2:24. **19:7** See Deut 24:1. **19:9** Some manuscripts add *And anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery*. Compare Matt 5:32. **19:12** Greek *and some make themselves eunuchs*.

PSALM 23:1-6

A psalm of David.

- ¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.
- ² He lets me rest in green meadows;

he leads me beside peaceful streams.

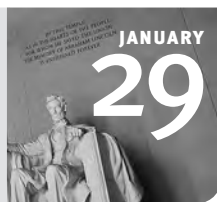
- ³ He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.
- ⁴ Even when I walk through the darkest valley,* I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.
- ⁵ You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.
- ⁶ Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.

23:4 Or *the dark valley of death*.

PROVERBS 5:22-23

- ²² An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him.
- ²³ He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his great foolishness.

Lord, remind me often: You’ve got this world in your hands. Upcoming elections, the economy, my life, and the lives of those I love. All I see is yours, and so is all I can’t yet see. I don’t need to feel anxiety or surrender to cynicism. Remind me. Amen.



EXODUS 8:1-9:35

^{1*}Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go back to Pharaoh and announce to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. ²If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs across your entire land. ³The Nile River will swarm with frogs. They will come up out of the river and into your palace, even into your bedroom and onto your bed!

They will enter the houses of your officials and your people. They will even jump into your ovens and your kneading bowls. ⁴Frogs will jump on you, your people, and all your officials.’”

^{5*}Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Raise the staff in your hand over all the rivers, canals, and ponds of Egypt, and bring up frogs over all the land.’” ⁶So Aaron raised his hand over the waters of Egypt, and

frogs came up and covered the whole land! ⁷But the magicians were able to do the same thing with their magic. They, too, caused frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.

⁸Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and begged, "Plead with the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people. I will let your people go, so they can offer sacrifices to the LORD."

⁹"You set the time!" Moses replied. "Tell me when you want me to pray for you, your officials, and your people. Then you and your houses will be rid of the frogs. They will remain only in the Nile River."

¹⁰"Do it tomorrow," Pharaoh said.

"All right," Moses replied, "it will be as you have said. Then you will know that there is no one like the LORD our God. ¹¹The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials, and your people. They will remain only in the Nile River."

¹²So Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh's palace, and Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had inflicted on Pharaoh. ¹³And the LORD did just what Moses had predicted. The frogs in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields all died. ¹⁴The Egyptians piled them into great heaps, and a terrible stench filled the land. ¹⁵But when Pharaoh saw that relief had come, he became stubborn.* He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted.

¹⁶So the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Raise your staff and strike the ground. The dust will turn into swarms of gnats throughout the land of Egypt.'" ¹⁷So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. When Aaron raised his hand and struck the ground with his staff, gnats infested the entire land, covering the Egyptians and their animals. All the dust in the land of Egypt turned into gnats. ¹⁸Pharaoh's magicians tried to do the same thing with their secret arts, but this time they failed. And the gnats covered everyone, people and animals alike.

¹⁹"This is the finger of God!" the magicians exclaimed to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He wouldn't listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

²⁰Then the LORD told Moses, "Get up early in the morning and stand in Pharaoh's way as he goes down to the river. Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. ²¹If you refuse, then I will send swarms of flies on you, your officials, your people, and all the houses. The Egyptian homes will be filled with flies, and the ground will be covered with them. ²²But this time I will spare the region of Goshen, where my people live. No flies will be found there. Then you will know that I am the LORD and that I am present even in the heart of your land. ²³I will make a clear distinction between* my people and your people. This miraculous sign will happen tomorrow.'"

²⁴And the LORD did just as he had said. A thick swarm of flies filled Pharaoh's palace and the houses of his officials. The whole land of Egypt was thrown into chaos by the flies.

²⁵Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. "All right! Go ahead and offer sacrifices to your God," he said. "But do it here in this land."

²⁶But Moses replied, "That wouldn't be right. The Egyptians detest the sacrifices that we offer to the LORD our God. Look, if we offer our sacrifices here where the Egyptians can see us, they will stone us. ²⁷We must take a three-day trip into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, just as he has commanded us."

²⁸"All right, go ahead," Pharaoh replied. "I will let you go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God. But don't go too far away. Now hurry and pray for me."

²⁹Moses answered, "As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD, and tomorrow the swarms of flies will disappear from you and your officials and all your people. But I am warning you, Pharaoh, don't lie to us again and

refuse to let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.”

³⁰So Moses left Pharaoh’s palace and pleaded with the LORD to remove all the flies. ³¹And the LORD did as Moses asked and caused the swarms of flies to disappear from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. Not a single fly remained. ³²But Pharaoh again became stubborn and refused to let the people go.

⁹“Go back to Pharaoh,” the LORD commanded Moses. “Tell him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. ²If you continue to hold them and refuse to let them go, ³the hand of the LORD will strike all your livestock—your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats—with a deadly plague. ⁴But the LORD will again make a distinction between the livestock of the Israelites and that of the Egyptians. Not a single one of Israel’s animals will die! ⁵The LORD has already set the time for the plague to begin. He has declared that he will strike the land tomorrow.’”

⁶And the LORD did just as he had said. The next morning all the livestock of the Egyptians died, but the Israelites didn’t lose a single animal. ⁷Pharaoh sent his officials to investigate, and they discovered that the Israelites had not lost a single animal! But even so, Pharaoh’s heart remained stubborn,* and he still refused to let the people go.

⁸Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a brick kiln, and have Moses toss it into the air while Pharaoh watches. ⁹The ashes will spread like fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, causing festering boils to break out on people and animals throughout the land.”

¹⁰So they took soot from a brick kiln and went and stood before Pharaoh. As Pharaoh watched, Moses threw the soot into the air, and boils broke out on people and animals alike. ¹¹Even the magicians were unable to stand before Moses, because the boils had

broken out on them and all the Egyptians. ¹²But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and just as the LORD had predicted to Moses, Pharaoh refused to listen.

¹³Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh. Tell him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. ¹⁴If you don’t, I will send more plagues on you* and your officials and your people. Then you will know that there is no one like me in all the earth. ¹⁵By now I could have lifted my hand and struck you and your people with a plague to wipe you off the face of the earth. ¹⁶But I have spared you for a purpose—to show you my power* and to spread my fame throughout the earth. ¹⁷But you still lord it over my people and refuse to let them go. ¹⁸So tomorrow at this time I will send a hailstorm more devastating than any in all the history of Egypt. ¹⁹Quick! Order your livestock and servants to come in from the fields to find shelter. Any person or animal left outside will die when the hail falls.’”

²⁰Some of Pharaoh’s officials were afraid because of what the LORD had said. They quickly brought their servants and livestock in from the fields. ²¹But those who paid no attention to the word of the LORD left theirs out in the open.

²²Then the LORD said to Moses, “Lift your hand toward the sky so hail may fall on the people, the livestock, and all the plants throughout the land of Egypt.”

²³So Moses lifted his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed toward the earth. The LORD sent a tremendous hailstorm against all the land of Egypt. ²⁴Never in all the history of Egypt had there been a storm like that, with such devastating hail and continuous lightning. ²⁵It left all of Egypt in ruins. The hail struck down everything in the open field—people, animals, and plants alike. Even the

trees were destroyed.²⁶ The only place without hail was the region of Goshen, where the people of Israel lived.

²⁷Then Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron. “This time I have sinned,” he confessed. “The LORD is the righteous one, and my people and I are wrong.”²⁸ Please beg the LORD to end this terrifying thunder and hail. We’ve had enough. I will let you go; you don’t need to stay any longer.”

²⁹“All right,” Moses replied. “As soon as I leave the city, I will lift my hands and pray to the LORD. Then the thunder and hail will stop, and you will know that the earth belongs to the LORD.”³⁰ But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God.”

³¹(All the flax and barley were ruined by the hail, because the barley had formed heads and the flax was budding.³² But the wheat and the emmer wheat were spared, because they had not yet sprouted from the ground.)

³³So Moses left Pharaoh’s court and went out of the city. When he lifted his hands to the LORD, the thunder and hail stopped, and the downpour ceased.³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and thunder had stopped, he and his officials sinned again, and Pharaoh again became stubborn.*³⁵ Because his heart was hard, Pharaoh refused to let the people leave, just as the LORD had predicted through Moses.

8:1 Verses 8:1-4 are numbered 7:26-29 in Hebrew text.

8:5 Verses 8:5-32 are numbered 8:1-28 in Hebrew text.

8:15 Hebrew *made his heart heavy*; also in 8:32.

8:23 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads

I will set redemption between. **9:7** Hebrew *heavy*.

9:14 Hebrew *on your heart*. **9:16** Greek version

reads *to display my power in you*; compare Rom 9:17.

9:34 Hebrew *made his heart heavy*.

MATTHEW 19:13-30

One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him.

¹⁴But Jesus said, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those

who are like these children.”¹⁵ And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left.

¹⁶Someone came to Jesus with this question: “Teacher,* what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

¹⁷“Why ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep* the commandments.”

¹⁸“Which ones?” the man asked.

And Jesus replied: “‘You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely.’¹⁹ Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.’*”

²⁰“I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?”

²¹Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²²But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

²³Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.²⁴ I’ll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

²⁵The disciples were astounded. “Then who in the world can be saved?” they asked.

²⁶Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.”

²⁷Then Peter said to him, “We’ve given up everything to follow you. What will we get?”

²⁸Jesus replied, “I assure you that when the world is made new* and the Son of Man* sits upon his glorious throne, you who have been my followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.²⁹ And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father

or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then. *”

19:16 Some manuscripts read *Good Teacher*.
19:17 Some manuscripts read *continue to keep*.
19:18-19 Exod 20:12-16; Deut 5:16-20; Lev 19:18.
19:28a Or *in the regeneration*. **19:28b** “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself. **19:30** Greek *But many who are first will be last; and the last, first*.

PSALM 24:1-10

A psalm of David.

- 1 The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it.
The world and all its people belong to him.
- 2 For he laid the earth’s foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths.
- 3 Who may climb the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
- 4 Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.
- 5 They will receive the LORD’s blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior.
- 6 Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.* *Interlude*

- 7 Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.
- 8 Who is the King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty;
the LORD, invincible in battle.
- 9 Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.
- 10 Who is the King of glory?
The LORD of Heaven’s Armies—
he is the King of glory. *Interlude*

24:6 As in two Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions; most Hebrew manuscripts read *O Jacob*.

PROVERBS 6:1-5

- 1 My child,* if you have put up security for a friend’s debt or agreed to guarantee the debt of a stranger—
- 2 if you have trapped yourself by your agreement and are caught by what you said—
- 3 follow my advice and save yourself,
for you have placed yourself at your friend’s mercy.
Now swallow your pride;
go and beg to have your name erased.
- 4 Don’t put it off; do it now!
Don’t rest until you do.
- 5 Save yourself like a gazelle escaping from a hunter,
like a bird fleeing from a net.

6:1 Hebrew *My son*.

Lord, so many names in the news, so many faces on the campaign trail. They all think they can lead, but is that true? Lord, give those who are stretching beyond their abilities the courage to step away; give those you’ve called the courage to stay the course. Amen.



EXODUS 10:1-12:13

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Return to Pharaoh and make your demands again. I have made him and his officials stubborn* so I can display my miraculous signs among them. ²I’ve also done it so you can tell your children

and grandchildren about how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and about the signs I displayed among them—and so you will know that I am the LORD.”

³So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “This is what the LORD,

the God of the Hebrews, says: How long will you refuse to submit to me? Let my people go, so they can worship me. ⁴If you refuse, watch out! For tomorrow I will bring a swarm of locusts on your country. ⁵They will cover the land so that you won't be able to see the ground. They will devour what little is left of your crops after the hailstorm, including all the trees growing in the fields. ⁶They will overrun your palaces and the homes of your officials and all the houses in Egypt. Never in the history of Egypt have your ancestors seen a plague like this one! And with that, Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

⁷Pharaoh's officials now came to Pharaoh and appealed to him. "How long will you let this man hold us hostage? Let the men go to worship the LORD their God! Don't you realize that Egypt lies in ruins?"

⁸So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "All right," he told them, "go and worship the LORD your God. But who exactly will be going with you?"

⁹Moses replied, "We will all go— young and old, our sons and daughters, and our flocks and herds. We must all join together in celebrating a festival to the LORD."

¹⁰Pharaoh retorted, "The LORD will certainly need to be with you if I let you take your little ones! I can see through your evil plan. ¹¹Never! Only the men may go and worship the LORD, since that is what you requested." And Pharaoh threw them out of the palace.

¹²Then the LORD said to Moses, "Raise your hand over the land of Egypt to bring on the locusts. Let them cover the land and devour every plant that survived the hailstorm."

¹³So Moses raised his staff over Egypt, and the LORD caused an east wind to blow over the land all that day and through the night. When morning arrived, the east wind had brought the locusts. ¹⁴And the locusts swarmed over the whole land of Egypt, settling in dense swarms from one end of the country to the other. It was the worst locust plague in Egyptian history, and

there has never been another one like it. ¹⁵For the locusts covered the whole country and darkened the land. They devoured every plant in the fields and all the fruit on the trees that had survived the hailstorm. Not a single leaf was left on the trees and plants throughout the land of Egypt.

¹⁶Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron. "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you," he confessed. ¹⁷"Forgive my sin, just this once, and plead with the LORD your God to take away this death from me."

¹⁸So Moses left Pharaoh's court and pleaded with the LORD. ¹⁹The LORD responded by shifting the wind, and the strong west wind blew the locusts into the Red Sea.* Not a single locust remained in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart again, so he refused to let the people go.

²¹Then the LORD said to Moses, "Lift your hand toward heaven, and the land of Egypt will be covered with a darkness so thick you can feel it." ²²So Moses lifted his hand to the sky, and a deep darkness covered the entire land of Egypt for three days. ²³During all that time the people could not see each other, and no one moved. But there was light as usual where the people of Israel lived.

²⁴Finally, Pharaoh called for Moses. "Go and worship the LORD," he said. "But leave your flocks and herds here. You may even take your little ones with you."

²⁵"No," Moses said, "you must provide us with animals for sacrifices and burnt offerings to the LORD our God. ²⁶All our livestock must go with us, too; not a hoof can be left behind. We must choose our sacrifices for the LORD our God from among these animals. And we won't know how we are to worship the LORD until we get there."

²⁷But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart once more, and he would not let them go. ²⁸"Get out of here!" Pharaoh shouted at Moses. "I'm warning you. Never come back to see me again! The day you see my face, you will die!"

²⁹“Very well,” Moses replied. “I will never see your face again.”

^{11:1}Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will strike Pharaoh and the land of Egypt with one more blow. After that, Pharaoh will let you leave this country. In fact, he will be so eager to get rid of you that he will force you all to leave. ²Tell all the Israelite men and women to ask their Egyptian neighbors for articles of silver and gold.” ³(Now the LORD had caused the Egyptians to look favorably on the people of Israel. And Moses was considered a very great man in the land of Egypt, respected by Pharaoh’s officials and the Egyptian people alike.)

⁴Moses had announced to Pharaoh, “This is what the LORD says: At midnight tonight I will pass through the heart of Egypt. ⁵All the firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest servant girl who grinds the flour. Even the firstborn of all the livestock will die. ⁶Then a loud wail will rise throughout the land of Egypt, a wail like no one has heard before or will ever hear again. ⁷But among the Israelites it will be so peaceful that not even a dog will bark. Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites. ⁸All the officials of Egypt will run to me and fall to the ground before me. ‘Please leave!’ they will beg. ‘Hurry! And take all your followers with you.’ Only then will I go!” Then, burning with anger, Moses left Pharaoh.

⁹Now the LORD had told Moses earlier, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, but then I will do even more mighty miracles in the land of Egypt.” ¹⁰Moses and Aaron performed these miracles in Pharaoh’s presence, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he wouldn’t let the Israelites leave the country.

^{12:1}While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the LORD gave the following instructions to Moses and

Aaron: ²“From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you. ³Announce to the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household. ⁴If a family is too small to eat a whole animal, let them share with another family in the neighborhood. Divide the animal according to the size of each family and how much they can eat. ⁵The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects.

⁶“Take special care of this chosen animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight. ⁷They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal. ⁸That same night they must roast the meat over a fire and eat it along with bitter salad greens and bread made without yeast. ⁹Do not eat any of the meat raw or boiled in water. The whole animal—including the head, legs, and internal organs—must be roasted over a fire. ¹⁰Do not leave any of it until the next morning. Burn whatever is not eaten before morning.

¹¹“These are your instructions for eating this meal: Be fully dressed,* wear your sandals, and carry your walking stick in your hand. Eat the meal with urgency, for this is the LORD’s Passover. ¹²On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the LORD! ¹³But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.

^{10:1} Hebrew *have made his heart and his officials’ hearts heavy.* ^{10:19} Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

^{12:11} Hebrew *Bind up your loins.*

MATTHEW 20:1-28

“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay the normal daily wage* and sent them out to work.

³“At nine o’clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. ⁴So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. ⁵So they went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o’clock he did the same thing.

⁶“At five o’clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, ‘Why haven’t you been working today?’

⁷“They replied, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“The landowner told them, ‘Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.’

⁸“That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first. ⁹When those hired at five o’clock were paid, each received a full day’s wage. ¹⁰When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day’s wage. ¹¹When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, ¹²“Those people worked only one hour, and yet you’ve paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.’

¹³“He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair! Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage? ¹⁴Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. ¹⁵Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?’

¹⁶“So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last.”

¹⁷As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside privately and told them what

was going to happen to him. ¹⁸“Listen,” he said, “we’re going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man* will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die. ¹⁹Then they will hand him over to the Romans* to be mocked, flogged with a whip, and crucified. But on the third day he will be raised from the dead.”

²⁰Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favor. ²¹“What is your request?” he asked.

She replied, “In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left.”

²²But Jesus answered by saying to them, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?”

“Oh yes,” they replied, “we are able!”

²³Jesus told them, “You will indeed drink from my bitter cup. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. My Father has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen.”

²⁴When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. ²⁵But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ²⁶But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

20:2 Greek *a denarius*, the payment for a full day’s labor; similarly in 20:9, 10, 13. **20:18** “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself. **20:19** Greek *the Gentiles*.

PSALM 25:1-15*

A psalm of David.

¹ O LORD, I give my life to you.

² I trust in you, my God!

Do not let me be disgraced,
 or let my enemies rejoice in my
 defeat.

³ No one who trusts in you will ever
 be disgraced,
 but disgrace comes to those who
 try to deceive others.

⁴ Show me the right path, O LORD;
 point out the road for me to
 follow.

⁵ Lead me by your truth and
 teach me,
 for you are the God who
 saves me.
 All day long I put my hope
 in you.

⁶ Remember, O LORD, your
 compassion and unfailing
 love,
 which you have shown from
 long ages past.

⁷ Do not remember the rebellious
 sins of my youth.
 Remember me in the light of
 your unfailing love,
 for you are merciful, O LORD.

⁸ The LORD is good and does what
 is right;
 he shows the proper path to
 those who go astray.

⁹ He leads the humble in doing
 right,
 teaching them his way.

¹⁰ The LORD leads with unfailing love
 and faithfulness
 all who keep his covenant and
 obey his demands.

¹¹ For the honor of your name, O LORD,
 forgive my many, many sins.

¹² Who are those who fear the LORD?
 He will show them the path they
 should choose.

¹³ They will live in prosperity,
 and their children will inherit
 the land.

¹⁴ The LORD is a friend to those who
 fear him.
 He teaches them his covenant.

¹⁵ My eyes are always on the LORD,
 for he rescues me from the traps
 of my enemies.

²⁵ This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; each
 verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew
 alphabet.

PROVERBS 6:6-11

⁶ Take a lesson from the ants, you
 lazybones.
 Learn from their ways and
 become wise!

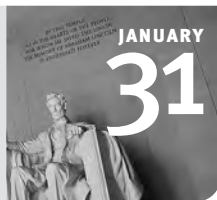
⁷ Though they have no prince
 or governor or ruler to make
 them work,
⁸ they labor hard all summer,
 gathering food for the winter.

⁹ But you, lazybones, how long will
 you sleep?
 When will you wake up?

¹⁰ A little extra sleep, a little more
 slumber,
 a little folding of the hands to
 rest—

¹¹ then poverty will pounce on you
 like a bandit;
 scarcity will attack you like an
 armed robber.

Lord, give those who labor in government jobs a great day today. May their commutes be peaceful, their meetings productive, their thinking clear, their lunch breaks refreshing. Because sometimes that's just what we need, Lord. Amen.



EXODUS 12:14-13:16

“This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the LORD. This is a law for all time.
¹⁵For seven days the bread you eat

must be made without yeast. On the first day of the festival, remove every trace of yeast from your homes. Anyone who eats bread made with yeast during the seven days of the festival will be cut off from the community of

Israel. ¹⁶On the first day of the festival and again on the seventh day, all the people must observe an official day for holy assembly. No work of any kind may be done on these days except in the preparation of food.

¹⁷“Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this day from generation to generation. ¹⁸The bread you eat must be made without yeast from the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty-first day of that month. ¹⁹During those seven days, there must be no trace of yeast in your homes. Anyone who eats anything made with yeast during this week will be cut off from the community of Israel. These regulations apply both to the foreigners living among you and to the native-born Israelites. ²⁰During those days you must not eat anything made with yeast. Wherever you live, eat only bread made without yeast.”

²¹Then Moses called all the elders of Israel together and said to them, “Go, pick out a lamb or young goat for each of your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. ²²Drain the blood into a basin. Then take a bundle of hyssop branches and dip it into the blood. Brush the hyssop across the top and sides of the doorframes of your houses. And no one may go out through the door until morning. ²³For the LORD will pass through the land to strike down the Egyptians. But when he sees the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe, the LORD will pass over your home. He will not permit his death angel to enter your house and strike you down.

²⁴“Remember, these instructions are a permanent law that you and your descendants must observe forever. ²⁵When you enter the land the LORD has promised to give you, you will continue to observe this ceremony. ²⁶Then your children will ask, ‘What does this ceremony mean?’ ²⁷And you will

reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. And though he struck the Egyptians, he spared our families.’” When Moses had finished speaking, all the people bowed down to the ground and worshiped.

²⁸So the people of Israel did just as the LORD had commanded through Moses and Aaron. ²⁹And that night at midnight, the LORD struck down all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the firstborn son of the prisoner in the dungeon. Even the firstborn of their livestock were killed. ³⁰Pharaoh and all his officials and all the people of Egypt woke up during the night, and loud wailing was heard throughout the land of Egypt. There was not a single house where someone had not died.

³¹Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron during the night. “Get out!” he ordered. “Leave my people—and take the rest of the Israelites with you! Go and worship the LORD as you have requested. ³²Take your flocks and herds, as you said, and be gone. Go, but bless me as you leave.” ³³All the Egyptians urged the people of Israel to get out of the land as quickly as possible, for they thought, “We will all die!”

³⁴The Israelites took their bread dough before yeast was added. They wrapped their kneading boards in their cloaks and carried them on their shoulders. ³⁵And the people of Israel did as Moses had instructed; they asked the Egyptians for clothing and articles of silver and gold. ³⁶The LORD caused the Egyptians to look favorably on the Israelites, and they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for. So they stripped the Egyptians of their wealth!

³⁷That night the people of Israel left Rameses and started for Succoth. There were about 600,000 men,* plus all the women and children. ³⁸A rabble of non-Israelites went with them, along with great flocks and herds of livestock. ³⁹For bread they baked flat cakes from the dough without

yeast they had brought from Egypt. It was made without yeast because the people were driven out of Egypt in such a hurry that they had no time to prepare the bread or other food.

⁴⁰The people of Israel had lived in Egypt* for 430 years. ⁴¹In fact, it was on the last day of the 430th year that all the LORD's forces left the land. ⁴²On this night the LORD kept his promise to bring his people out of the land of Egypt. So this night belongs to him, and it must be commemorated every year by all the Israelites, from generation to generation.

⁴³Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "These are the instructions for the festival of Passover. No outsiders are allowed to eat the Passover meal. ⁴⁴But any slave who has been purchased may eat it if he has been circumcised. ⁴⁵Temporary residents and hired servants may not eat it. ⁴⁶Each Passover lamb must be eaten in one house. Do not carry any of its meat outside, and do not break any of its bones. ⁴⁷The whole community of Israel must celebrate this Passover festival.

⁴⁸"If there are foreigners living among you who want to celebrate the LORD's Passover, let all their males be circumcised. Only then may they celebrate the Passover with you like any native-born Israelite. But no uncircumcised male may ever eat the Passover meal. ⁴⁹This instruction applies to everyone, whether a native-born Israelite or a foreigner living among you."

⁵⁰So all the people of Israel followed all the LORD's commands to Moses and Aaron. ⁵¹On that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt like an army.

^{13:1}Then the LORD said to Moses, ²"Dedicate to me every firstborn among the Israelites. The first offspring to be born, of both humans and animals, belongs to me."

³So Moses said to the people, "This is a day to remember forever—the day you left Egypt, the place of your slavery. Today the LORD has brought you out by the power of his mighty hand.

(Remember, eat no food containing yeast.) ⁴On this day in early spring, in the month of Abib,* you have been set free. ⁵You must celebrate this event in this month each year after the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites. (He swore to your ancestors that he would give you this land—a land flowing with milk and honey.) ⁶For seven days the bread you eat must be made without yeast. Then on the seventh day, celebrate a feast to the LORD. ⁷Eat bread without yeast during those seven days. In fact, there must be no yeast bread or any yeast at all found within the borders of your land during this time.

⁸"On the seventh day you must explain to your children, 'I am celebrating what the LORD did for me when I left Egypt.' ⁹This annual festival will be a visible sign to you, like a mark branded on your hand or your forehead. Let it remind you always to recite this teaching of the LORD: 'With a strong hand, the LORD rescued you from Egypt.'* ¹⁰So observe the decree of this festival at the appointed time each year.

¹¹"This is what you must do when the LORD fulfills the promise he swore to you and to your ancestors. When he gives you the land where the Canaanites now live, ¹²you must present all firstborn sons and firstborn male animals to the LORD, for they belong to him. ¹³A firstborn donkey may be bought back from the LORD by presenting a lamb or young goat in its place. But if you do not buy it back, you must break its neck. However, you must buy back every firstborn son.

¹⁴"And in the future, your children will ask you, 'What does all this mean?' Then you will tell them, 'With the power of his mighty hand, the LORD brought us out of Egypt, the place of our slavery. ¹⁵Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, so the LORD killed all the firstborn males throughout the land of Egypt, both people and animals. That is why I now sacrifice all the firstborn males

to the LORD—except that the firstborn sons are always bought back.’¹⁶ This ceremony will be like a mark branded on your hand or your forehead. It is a reminder that the power of the LORD’s mighty hand brought us out of Egypt.”

12:37 Or *fighting men*; Hebrew reads *men on foot*.

12:40 Samaritan Pentateuch reads *in Canaan and Egypt*; Greek version reads *in Egypt and Canaan*.

13:4 Hebrew *On this day in the month of Abib*. This first month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of March and April. **13:9** Or *Let it remind you always to keep the instructions of the LORD on the tip of your tongue, because with a strong hand, the LORD rescued you from Egypt*.

MATTHEW 20:29–21:22

As Jesus and the disciples left the town of Jericho, a large crowd followed behind.³⁰ Two blind men were sitting beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was coming that way, they began shouting, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³¹“Be quiet!” the crowd yelled at them.

But they only shouted louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

³²When Jesus heard them, he stopped and called, “What do you want me to do for you?”

³³“Lord,” they said, “we want to see!”³⁴ Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Instantly they could see! Then they followed him.

^{21:1}As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead.² “Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me.³ If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

⁴This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said,

⁵ “Tell the people of Jerusalem,*
‘Look, your King is coming to
you.

He is humble, riding on a donkey—
riding on a donkey’s colt.’”*

⁶The two disciples did as Jesus commanded.⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.*

⁸Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.⁹ Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting,

“Praise God* for the Son of David!
Blessings on the one who comes
in the name of the LORD!
Praise God in highest heaven!”*

¹⁰The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. “Who is this?” they asked.

¹¹And the crowds replied, “It’s Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

¹²Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves.¹³ He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves!”*

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them.¹⁵ The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the children in the Temple shouting, “Praise God for the Son of David.”

But the leaders were indignant.¹⁶ They asked Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?”

“Yes,” Jesus replied. “Haven’t you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, ‘You have taught children and infants to give you praise.’”¹⁷ Then he returned to Bethany, where he stayed overnight.

¹⁸In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry,¹⁹ and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never

bear fruit again!” And immediately the fig tree withered up.

²⁰The disciples were amazed when they saw this and asked, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?”

²¹Then Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don’t doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and it will happen. ²²You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.”

21:5a Greek *Tell the daughter of Zion*. Isa 62:11.
21:5b Zech 9:9. **21:7** Greek *over them, and he sat on them*. **21:9a** Greek *Hosanna*, an exclamation of praise that literally means “save now”; also in 21:9b, 15. **21:9b** Pss 118:25-26; 148:1. **21:13** Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11. **21:16** Ps 8:2 (Greek version).

PSALM 25:16-22

- ¹⁶ Turn to me and have mercy,
 for I am alone and in deep distress.
- ¹⁷ My problems go from bad to worse.
 Oh, save me from them all!
- ¹⁸ Feel my pain and see my trouble.
 Forgive all my sins.

- ¹⁹ See how many enemies I have
 and how viciously they hate me!
- ²⁰ Protect me! Rescue my life from
 them!
 Do not let me be disgraced, for
 in you I take refuge.
- ²¹ May integrity and honesty
 protect me,
 for I put my hope in you.
- ²² O God, ransom Israel
 from all its troubles.

PROVERBS 6:12-15

- ¹² What are worthless and wicked
 people like?
 They are constant liars,
- ¹³ signaling their deceit with a wink
 of the eye,
 a nudge of the foot, or the
 wiggle of fingers.
- ¹⁴ Their perverted hearts plot evil,
 and they constantly stir up
 trouble.
- ¹⁵ But they will be destroyed suddenly,
 broken in an instant beyond all
 hope of healing.