PORTALS OF PRAYER
DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

English Standard Version
PORTALS of PRAYER
DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

English Standard Version
containing the
Old and New Testaments

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PORTALS OF PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Portals of Prayer
Devotional Bible

A portal is a large or elaborate doorway or entrance. The Portals of Prayer devotions in this Bible were carefully chosen to provide doorways to meditation and prayer as you read through the Word of God. They help you pause along the way, perceive the glorious work of Jesus Christ more clearly, and understand how His life and salvation fits into your daily life as God’s own precious child through faith in God’s Son.

May the Holy Spirit deepen your love for your loving heavenly Father and your gracious Savior through these doorways into His marvelous Word.
PREFACE
TO THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

The Bible

“This Book [is] the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God.” With these words the Moderator of the Church of Scotland hands a Bible to the new monarch in Britain’s coronation service. These words echo the King James Bible translators, who wrote in 1611, “God’s sacred Word . . . is that inestimable treasure that excelleth all the riches of the earth.” This assessment of the Bible is the motivating force behind the publication of the English Standard Version.

Translation Legacy

The English Standard Version (ESV) stands in the classic mainstream of English Bible translations over the past half-millennium. The fountainhead of that stream was William Tyndale’s New Testament of 1526; marking its course were the King James Version of 1611 (KJV), the English Revised Version of 1885 (RV), the American Standard Version of 1901 (ASV), and the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971 (RSV). In that stream, faithfulness to the text and vigorous pursuit of precision were combined with simplicity, beauty, and dignity of expression. Our goal has been to carry forward this legacy for this generation and generations to come.

To this end each word and phrase in the ESV has been carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to ensure the fullest accuracy and clarity and to avoid under-translating or overlooking any nuance of the original text. The words and phrases themselves grow out of the Tyndale–King James legacy, and most recently out of the RSV, with the 1971 RSV text providing the starting point for our work. Archaic language has been brought into line with current usage and significant corrections have been made in the translation of key texts. But throughout, our goal has been to retain the depth of meaning and enduring quality of language that have made their indelible mark on the English-speaking world and have defined the life and doctrine of its church over the last five centuries.

Translation Philosophy

The ESV is an “essentially literal” translation that seeks as far as possible to reproduce the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on “word-for-word” correspondence, at the same time taking full account of differences in grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and exact force of the original.
In contrast to the ESV, some Bible versions have followed a “thought-for-thought” rather than “word-for-word” translation philosophy, emphasizing “dynamic equivalence” rather than the “essentially literal” meaning of the original. A “thought-for-thought” translation is of necessity more inclined to reflect the interpretive views of the translator and the influences of contemporary culture.

Every translation is at many points a trade-off between literal precision and readability, between “formal equivalence” in expression and “functional equivalence” in communication, and the ESV is no exception. Within this framework we have sought to be “as literal as possible” while maintaining clarity of expression and literary excellence. Therefore, to the extent that plain English permits and the meaning in each case allows, we have sought to use the same English word for important recurring words in the original; and, as far as grammar and syntax allow, we have rendered Old Testament passages cited in the New in ways that show their correspondence. Thus in each of these areas, as well as throughout the Bible as a whole, we have sought to capture all the echoes and overtones of meaning that are so abundantly present in the original texts.

As an essentially literal translation, taking into account grammar and syntax, the ESV thus seeks to carry over every possible nuance of meaning in the original words of Scripture into our own language. As such, the ESV is ideally suited for in-depth study of the Bible. Indeed, with its commitment to literary excellence, the ESV is equally well suited for public reading and preaching, for private reading and reflection, for both academic and devotional study, and for Scripture memorization.

**Translation Principles and Style**

The ESV also carries forward classic translation principles in its literary style. Accordingly it retains theological terminology—words such as grace, faith, justification, sanctification, redemption, regeneration, reconciliation, propitiation—because of their central importance for Christian doctrine and also because the underlying Greek words were already becoming key words and technical terms among Christians in New Testament times.

The ESV lets the stylistic variety of the biblical writers fully express itself—from the exalted prose that opens Genesis, to the flowing narratives of the historical books, to the rich metaphors and dramatic imagery of the poetic books, to the ringing rhetoric in the prophetic books, to the smooth elegance of Luke, to the profound simplicities of John, and the closely reasoned logic of Paul.

In punctuating, paragraphing, dividing long sentences, and rendering connectives, the ESV follows the path that seems to make the ongoing flow of thought clearest in English. The biblical languages regularly connect sentences by frequent repetition of words such as “and,” “but,” and “for,” in a way that goes beyond the conventions of current literary English. Effective translation, however, requires that these links in the original be reproduced so that the flow of the argument will be transparent to the reader. We have therefore normally translated
PREFACE
these connectives, though occasionally we have varied the rendering by using alternatives (such as “also,” “however,” “now,” “so,” “then,” or “thus”) when they better express the linkage in specific instances.

In the area of gender language, the goal of the ESV is to render literally what is in the original. For example, “anyone” replaces “any man” where there is no word corresponding to “man” in the original languages, and “people” rather than “men” is regularly used where the original languages refer to both men and women. But the words “man” and “men” are retained where a male meaning component is part of the original Greek or Hebrew. Likewise, the word “man” has been retained where the original text intends to convey a clear contrast between “God” on the one hand and “man” on the other hand, with “man” being used in the collective sense of the whole human race (see Luke 2:52). Similarly, the English word “brothers” (translating the Greek word adelphoi) is retained as an important familial form of address between fellow-Jews and fellow-Christians in the first century. A recurring note is included to indicate that the term “brothers” (adelphoi) was often used in Greek to refer to both men and women, and to indicate the specific instances in the text where this is the case. In addition, the English word “sons” (translating the Greek word huioi) is retained in specific instances because the underlying Greek term usually includes a male meaning component and it was used as a legal term in the adoption and inheritance laws of first-century Rome. As used by the apostle Paul, this term refers to the status of all Christians, both men and women, who, having been adopted into God’s family, now enjoy all the privileges, obligations, and inheritance rights of God’s children.

The inclusive use of the generic “he” has also regularly been retained, because this is consistent with similar usage in the original languages and because an essentially literal translation would be impossible without it.

In each case the objective has been transparency to the original text, allowing the reader to understand the original on its own terms rather than in the terms of our present-day Western culture.

The Translation of Specialized Terms
In the translation of biblical terms referring to God, the ESV takes great care to convey the specific nuances of meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek words. First, concerning terms that refer to God in the Old Testament: God, the Maker of heaven and earth, introduced himself to the people of Israel with a special personal name, the consonants for which are YHWH (see Exodus 3:14–15). Scholars call this the “Tetragrammaton,” a Greek term referring to the four Hebrew letters YHWH. The exact pronunciation of YHWH is uncertain, because the Jewish people considered the personal name of God to be so holy that it should never be spoken aloud. Instead of reading the word YHWH, therefore, they would normally read the Hebrew word ‘adonay (“Lord”), and the ancient translations into Greek, Syriac, and Aramaic also followed this practice. When the vowels of the word ‘adonay are placed with the consonants of YHWH, this results in the familiar word Jehovah that was used in some earlier English Bible
translations. As is common among English translations today, the ESV usually renders the personal name of God (YHWH) by the word LORD (printed in small capitals). An exception to this is when the Hebrew word 'adonay appears together with YHWH, in which case the two words are rendered together as “the Lord [in lowercase] GOD [in small capitals].” In contrast to the personal name for God (YHWH), the more general name for God in Old Testament Hebrew is 'elohim and its related forms of 'el or 'eloh, all of which are normally translated “God” (in lowercase letters). The use of these different ways to translate the Hebrew words for God is especially beneficial to English readers, enabling them to see and understand the different ways that the personal name and the general name for God are both used to refer to the One True God of the Old Testament.

Second, in the New Testament, the Greek word Christos has been translated consistently as “Christ.” Although the term originally meant simply “anointed,” among Jews in New Testament times it had specifically come to designate the Messiah, the great Savior that God had promised to raise up. In other New Testament contexts, however, especially among Gentiles, Christos (“Christ”) was on its way to becoming a proper name. It is important, therefore, to keep the context in mind in understanding the various ways that Christos (“Christ”) is used in the New Testament. At the same time, in accord with its “essentially literal” translation philosophy, the ESV has retained consistency and concordance in the translation of Christos (“Christ”) throughout the New Testament.

Third, a particular difficulty is presented when words in biblical Hebrew and Greek refer to ancient practices and institutions that do not correspond directly to those in the modern world. Such is the case in the translation of 'ebed (Hebrew) and doulos (Greek), terms which are often rendered “slave.” These terms, however, actually cover a range of relationships that requires a range of renderings—“slave,” “bondservant,” or “servant”—depending on the context. Further, the word “slave” currently carries associations with the often brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery particularly in nineteenth-century America. For this reason, the ESV translation of the words 'ebed and doulos has been undertaken with particular attention to their meaning in each specific context. Thus in Old Testament times, one might enter slavery either voluntarily (e.g., to escape poverty or to pay off a debt) or involuntarily (e.g., by birth, by being captured in battle, or by judicial sentence). Protection for all in servitude in ancient Israel was provided by the Mosaic Law, including specific provisions for release from slavery. In New Testament times, a doulos is often best described as a “bondservant”—that is, someone in the Roman Empire officially bound under contract to serve his master for seven years (except for those in Caesar’s household in Rome who were contracted for fourteen years). When the contract expired, the person was freed, given his wage that had been saved by the master, and officially declared a freedman. The ESV usage thus seeks to express the most fitting nuance of meaning in each context. Where absolute ownership by a master is envisaged (as in Romans 6), “slave” is used; where a more limited form of servitude is in view, “bondservant” is used (as in 1 Corinthians 7:21–24); where the context indicates a wide range of freedom (as in John 4:51), “servant” is preferred.
PREFACE

Footnotes are generally provided to identify the Hebrew or Greek and the range of meaning that these terms may carry in each case. The issues involved in translating the Greek word *doulos* apply also to the Greek word *sundoulos*, translated in the text as “fellow servant.”

Fourth, it is sometimes suggested that Bible translations should capitalize pronouns referring to deity. It has seemed best not to capitalize deity pronouns in the ESV, however, for the following reasons: first, there is nothing in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that corresponds to such capitalization; second, the practice of capitalizing deity pronouns in English Bible translations is a recent innovation, which began only in the mid-twentieth century; and, third, such capitalization is absent from the KJV Bible and the whole stream of Bible translations that the ESV carries forward.

A fifth specialized term, the word “behold,” usually has been retained as the most common translation for the Hebrew word *hinneh* and the Greek word *idou*. Both of these words mean something like “Pay careful attention to what follows! This is important!” Other than the word “behold,” there is no single word in English that fits well in most contexts. Although “Look!” and “See!” and “Listen!” would be workable in some contexts, in many others these words lack sufficient weight and dignity. Given the principles of “essentially literal” translation, it is important not to leave *hinneh* and *idou* completely untranslated and so to lose the intended emphasis in the original languages. The older and more formal word “behold” has usually been retained, therefore, as the best available option for conveying the original weight of meaning.

Textual Basis and Resources

The ESV is based on the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible as found in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (5th ed., 1997), and on the Greek text in the 2014 editions of the *Greek New Testament* (5th corrected ed.), published by the United Bible Societies (UBS), and *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed., 2012), edited by Nestle and Aland. The currently renewed respect among Old Testament scholars for the Masoretic text is reflected in the ESV’s attempt, wherever possible, to translate difficult Hebrew passages as they stand in the Masoretic text rather than resorting to emendations or to finding an alternative reading in the ancient versions. In exceptional, difficult cases, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and other sources were consulted to shed possible light on the text, or, if necessary, to support a divergence from the Masoretic text. Similarly, in a few difficult cases in the New Testament, the ESV has followed a Greek text different from the text given preference in the UBS/Nestle-Aland 28th edition. Throughout, the translation team has benefited greatly from the massive textual resources that have become readily available recently, from new insights into biblical laws and culture, and from current advances in Hebrew and Greek lexicography and grammatical understanding.

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Textual Footnotes

The footnotes that are included in most editions of the ESV are therefore an integral part of the ESV translation, informing the reader of textual variations and difficulties and showing how these have been resolved by the ESV translation team. In addition to this, the footnotes indicate significant alternative readings and occasionally provide an explanation for technical terms or for a difficult reading in the text.

Publishing Team

The ESV publishing team has included more than a hundred people. The fourteen-member Translation Oversight Committee benefited from the work of more than fifty biblical experts serving as Translation Review Scholars and from the comments of the more than fifty members of the Advisory Council, all of which was carried out under the auspices of the Crossway Board of Directors. This hundred-plus-member team shares a common commitment to the truth of God’s Word and to historic Christian orthodoxy and is international in scope, including leaders in many denominations.

To God’s Honor and Praise

We know that no Bible translation is perfect; but we also know that God uses imperfect and inadequate things to his honor and praise. So to our triune God and to his people we offer what we have done, with our prayers that it may prove useful, with gratitude for much help given, and with ongoing wonder that our God should ever have entrusted to us so momentous a task.

Soli Deo Gloria!—To God alone be the glory!

The Translation Oversight Committee
Old Testament
The Creation of the World

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

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. 8 And God called the expanse Heaven. 9 And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw

GOD THE CREATOR

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

Each time we confess the Creed, we confess that God the Father made us. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we ask for His continued sustaining of life as we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” which includes “everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, . . . and the like” (Small Catechism, Fourth Petition).

When we visit the Grand Canyon, see the NASA photo of the day, or watch the waves crash along the shore, it is easy to thank God for His creation. The first ultrasound picture of a baby illustrates God’s sustaining of life.

Yet we live in a world where God’s creation is not the perfect creation that He intended it to be. There is conflict in all the relationships that God created to be good: humanity and creation, man and woman, God and humanity. Into this broken world, our Savior came to redeem us and one day bring us into a new heaven and a new earth. While we wait for that day, we thank God for His creation and proclaim His redemption of it.

God the Father, thank You for creating and sustaining our lives. Jesus, thank You for redeeming us and making us into a new creation. Holy Spirit, sustain our faith until life everlasting. Amen.
GENESIS 1:13

that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons; and for days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 18 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

19 And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” 20 So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 21 And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And it was so. 22 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

23 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. 24 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

25 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

26 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

27 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 28 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 29 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 30 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 3 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 4 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

9 Or appointed times 2 Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19–20 3 The Hebrew word for man (adam) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name Adam
Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

S
omtimes people give friends or family Christmas or birthday gifts that they have created themselves. The gift may be an article of clothing that was personally sewn or knitted or a gift of baked goods. The gift may carry a label reading “Handmade by” followed by the giver’s name. Authors’ names appear on the title pages of their books, and artists sign their names to their works of art.

The artist Michelangelo signed his beautiful statue the Pietà after hearing someone attribute the work to another artist. He chiseled the phrase “Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine, made this” on the sash across Mary’s chest.

God created human beings as the work of His hands. He formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed life into His creation. God took a rib from His newly formed man and created a woman for him. They were both created in the image and likeness of God. These wonderful created beings, men and women, still bear His image. When you look at a human being, of any age, even those yet unborn, imagine that you can see these words imprinted there: “God made this.”

Lord, teach us to value the gift of human life, created and redeemed by Your hand. Amen.
GENESIS 2:20

them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

THE GOODNESS OF MARRIAGE

In God’s “very good” creation, one thing was not good: “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Adam may have found a companion naming the animals God paraded before him (Genesis 2:19–20), but God wanted more for Adam than companionship. He wanted Adam to have a relationship that mirrored God’s relationship. He who bore the image of God needed someone who also bore that image. So God created Eve in His image and instituted the godlike relationship of marriage as part of creation’s goodness.

Sin’s entrance into the world marred God’s good creation, including marriage. But humanity’s sinfulness and problematic marriages do not mar the essence of marriage. What God intended marriage to be in the beginning, He still intends marriage to be. Marriage cannot be redefined without assaulting the divine relationship on which it is based.

Scripture uses marriage to picture that divine relationship, the masterpiece being Jesus, the Bridegroom of the Church. His unconditional love for His Bride caused Him to give Himself up for her. Our God suffers and dies as our Groom—what a grand and comforting mystery!

Jesus, our Bridegroom, help us honor You by honoring marriage. Amen.
Israel Increases Greatly in Egypt

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household:
2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah,
3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,
4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher.  All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt.
5 Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation.
6 But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

Pharaoh Oppresses Israel

8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.
9 And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. 10 Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. 13 So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.
14 Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was

FROM SLAVES TO SONS

So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves. EXODUS 1:13–14

Slaves hold few, if any, rights. They obey their masters’ commands because they know disobedience will bring heavy punishment. Their yoke is heavy because their very lives are burdened with the crushing oppression that comes with their permanent imprisonment. They are the opposite of free. They are prisoners.

Paul reminds his Galatian brothers and sisters of their slavery to sin, which is their natural, wicked state. Shackled and burdened, they had no hope of escape, always failing to keep the Law. Yet “when the fullness of time had come,” Christ came to do the unthinkable: He released them from their death under the Law, “so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5). Just think of it! From the most despised, the most hopeless slaves, we are adopted, chosen, marked as being in God’s family. From the lowest status to the most cherished, we possess salvation through Christ and are now heirs of God. Liberated from our sins and from a sure and certain death, we give reverent thanks to our most gracious, loving heavenly Father, who calls us His beloved children.

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word, continually binding us as sons to You and heirs of Your eternal kingdom. Amen.
named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” 17 But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. 18 So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” 19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” 20 So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”

MOSES: PLANNING AHEAD

The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. EXODUS 2:2

We like to plan for the future, but our plans often fail. Moses’ parents planned to give birth to a baby, whom they hoped would be a girl because of Pharaoh’s plan to murder all Hebrew baby boys. When Moses was not a girl, they planned to keep him quiet so he would remain unnoticed. But babies cry, so they planned to keep him hidden. Then God intervened with His own plan, which was far beyond anything Moses’ parents could have imagined.

Moses was raised by Pharaoh’s daughter, but he was cared for by his own mother. He heard God’s voice in a burning bush, parted a sea, led the Israelites out of slavery to the borders of the Promised Land, and wrote the first five books of the Bible. That was quite a plan for a small baby.

God’s plan was to send a Savior to free the world from sin. Because His plans never fail, we are blessed in ways we could never imagine. He is our loving companion throughout our earthly lives and our sure entrance into heaven, where He has our mansion prepared. That is His good and perfect plan for you and me. We can count on it!

Dear heavenly Father, our lives are in Your loving and capable hands. Help us trust You for all things. Amen.
“Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” 8 And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. 9 And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him. 

10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, “Because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

**Moses Flees to Midian**

11 One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. 12 He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” 14 He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” 15 When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. 17 The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. 18 When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come home so soon today?” 19 They said, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.” 20 He said to his daughters, “Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. 22 She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”

**God Hears Israel’s Groaning**

23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

**The Burning Bush**

3 Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” 4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” 5 Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” 6 And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. 7 Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know
God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” 15 God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, 17 and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.” ’ 18 And they will listen to your voice, and you your sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” 13 Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” 15 God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, “I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, 17 and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.” ’ 18 And they will listen to your voice, and you

ENGAGING MOSES THROUGH A CALL

Looking for a job? How about this résumé? “Orphaned, raised cross-culturally, among the wealthiest on the planet, now herding sheep, a bit hotheaded, on the run from a murder conviction, eighty years old, cross-cultural marriage, quick with excuses, not eloquent.” Think you would get the job?

That was Moses’ résumé when God spoke to him out of the bush. Burning, but not burning up, that bush caught Moses’ attention. God revealed Himself as a dangerous God, fiery but not for destroying. God had a plan to deliver His people—for that plan He used a man like Moses. This dangerous yet compelling God invited Moses into relationship. He knew Moses’ weaknesses and excuses. Yet He persisted in calling him to shepherd God’s people from bondage to freedom.

That same God calls to you today—not from a burning bush, but from the depths of His heart, blazing with love for you. He invites you to join with Him in setting people free from their burden of sin and guilt into the freedom of life and light in Jesus Christ. Will you say anything but “Here I am”?

Loving Lord, don’t let me be content with life as usual. Take me by the hand on a journey where I encounter people who need Your love. Amen.
Laws for Burnt Offerings

The Lord called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, 

1 “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

2 “If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord.

3 “He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Then he shall kill the bull before the Lord, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. And Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

4 “If his gift for a burnt offering is from the flock, from the sheep or goats, he shall bring a male without blemish, and he shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Then he shall kill the bull before the Lord, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. And Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

GOD’S SIN-BEAKER

If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the Lord. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

Israel’s high priest was the one man appointed by God to bear the sins of the nation of Israel and place them on innocent livestock. Thus the high priest was the primary—yet imperfect—sin-bearer. Because of his imperfection, the high priest could not himself atone for Israel’s sins, and in fact the animals on which he placed the sin, though they were innocent, could not atone for sins either. They could serve only to convey forgiveness and to portray the coming Savior.

Jesus was born as the supreme High Priest. He, unlike any previous high priest, is a “faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation [atonement] for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17). This High Priest is not an imperfect sin-bearer like the previous high priests, but He is the perfect sin-bearer for the entire world. As the sinless High Priest, Jesus does not need to pass mankind’s sins on to innocent beasts; He, as the innocent one, is the Priest who can give Himself as a sin offering.

An anonymous hymnwriter captures the image: “Offered was He for greatest and for least, Himself the victim and Himself the priest” (LSB 637:1).

O great High Priest, You who carried the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Amen.
of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. 12 And he shall cut it into pieces, with its head and its fat, and the priest shall arrange them on the wood that is on the fire on the altar, 13 but the entrails and the legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall offer all of it and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

14 “If his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or pigeons. 15 And the priest shall bring it to the altar and wring off its head and burn it on the altar. Its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. 16 He shall remove its crop with its contents 1 and cast it beside the altar on the east side, in the place for ashes. 17 He shall tear it open by its wings, but shall not sever it completely. And the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Laws for Grain Offerings

2 “When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it 2 and bring it to Aaron’s sons the priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense, and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 3 But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD’s food offerings.

4 “When you bring a grain offering baked in the oven as an offering, it shall be unleavened loaves of fine flour mixed with oil or unleavened wafers smeared with oil. 5 And if your offering is a grain offering baked on a griddle, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mixed with oil. 6 You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. 7 And if your offering is a grain offering cooked in a pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. 8 And you shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD, and when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9 And the priest shall take from the grain offering its memorial portion and burn this on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 10 But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD’s food offerings.

11 “No grain offering that you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey as a food offering to the LORD. 12 As an offering of firstfruits you may bring them to the LORD, but they shall not be offered on the altar for a pleasing aroma. 13 You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. You shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be missing from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

14 “If you offer a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits fresh ears, roasted with fire, crushed new grain. 15 And you shall put oil on it and lay frankincense on it; it is a grain offering. 16 And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion some of the crushed grain and some of the oil with all of its frankincense; it is a food offering to the LORD.

Laws for Peace Offerings

3 “If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. 2 And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it
at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar.

1And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as a food offering to the Lord, he shall offer the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys.

2And the priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma. All fat is the Lord's. 3It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood."

Laws for Sin Offerings

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the Lord's commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them, 3if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering. 4He shall bring the bull to the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord and lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it in front of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar.

5Then from the sacrifice of the peace offering he shall offer as a food offering to the Lord its fat; he shall remove the whole fat tail, cut off close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. 6And the priest shall burn it on the altar as a food offering to the Lord.

7“If his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the Lord and lay his hand on its head and kill it in front of the tent of meeting, and the sons of Aaron shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. 8Then he shall offer from it, as his offering for a food offering to the Lord, the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys (just as these are taken from the ox of the sacrifice of the peace offerings); and
LETTICUS 4:11

the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. 11 But the skin of the bull and all its flesh, with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung—all the rest of the bull—he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, to the ash heap, and shall burn it up on a fire of wood. On the ash heap it shall be burned up.

12 “If the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the LORD’s commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt, when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering and bring it in front of the tent of meeting. And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD, and the bull shall be killed before the LORD. Then the anointed priest shall

bring some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting, and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the veil. And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is in the tent of meeting before the LORD, and the rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And all its fat he shall take from it and burn on the altar. Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this. And the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. 21 And he shall carry the bull outside the camp and burn it up as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

22 “When a leader sins, doing unintentionally any one of all the things that

ENGAGED THROUGH ATONING BLOOD

Then the anointed priest shall bring some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting. LEVITICUS 4:16

The tabernacle and the temple were bloody places. Animals died. Blood poured out as knives opened veins. Blood was caught in basins and sprinkled on sanctuary furnishings and over people’s heads. Aaron dealt with blood because atonement was needed. He carried blood in to atone for his sins and for the sanctuary. Blood covered the people’s guilt.

All this took place because God was not pleased with people who had chosen their own ways above His higher ways. Atonement was critical if God and man were to be “at one” with one another. This was so not because God had changed but because His love is consistent.

His love calls for atonement that does not require the eternal destruction of every person. Originally, that way involved the death of animals, sacrifices repeated day after bloody day. But something more was needed.

One day, the veins of God’s Son would pour forth cleansing blood. In that act, God would complete the atonement for the sins of the world, that we might be welcomed into His fellowship forever.

Blessed Father, how can we thank You enough for the atoning blood of Your Son? Keep us living always for You, knowing we are forgiven. Amen.
The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, "Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, by clans, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male, head by head. From twenty years old and upward, all in Israel who are able to go to war, you and Aaron shall list them, company by company. And there shall be with you a man from each tribe, each man being the head of the house of his fathers. And these are the names of the men who shall assist you. From Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; from Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; from Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; from Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; from Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; from the sons of Joseph, from Ephraim, Elisheva the son of Ammihud, and from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; from Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; from Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; from Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran; from Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; from Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan."

These were the ones chosen from the congregation, the chiefs of their ancestral tribes, the heads of the clans of Israel.

Moses and Aaron took these men who had been named, and on the first day of the second month, they assembled the whole congregation together.

Plenty of Room

The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, . . . saying, “Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel."

When my dad moved to a smaller house, I was glad for him. He needed less to take care of. But selfishly, I was worried. It was his house, but would there still be room for me? Would I have a place, in that smaller home, that I could think of as my own?

Our Father’s house is full of rooms. Then again, He has many children. A countless number, all thronging toward heaven, all claiming a place in the family of God. God has so many people to love. He has so many people to welcome home. How can He possibly have room in His heart for me?

Jesus, our Brother, kind and good, reassures our troubled hearts that He Himself has made room enough for us. On the cross, He reserved our space in God’s house and claimed us as His siblings. Though we are insignificant among the throng of believers and unworthy of being a part of the family of God, Jesus sees us, welcomes us, and takes us with Him before His Father’s throne. He places His nail-torn hands on our heads and says, “Here—this is the one I died for.” And then He shows us the endless love that is ours. Because in our Father’s house, there is always room.

Dear heavenly Father, help me to remember that there is room in Your house for my neighbor too. Amen.
who registered themselves by clans, by fathers’ houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:

31 those listed of the tribe of Zebulun were 57,400.

32 Of the people of Joseph, namely, of the people of Ephraim, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:

33 those listed of the tribe of Ephraim were 40,500.

34 Of the people of Manasseh, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:

35 those listed of the tribe of Manasseh were 32,200.

36 Of the people of Benjamin, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:

37 those listed of the tribe of Benjamin were 35,400.

38 Of the people of Dan, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:

39 those listed of the tribe of Dan were 62,700.

40 Of the people of Asher, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:

41 those listed of the tribe of Asher were 41,500.

42 Of the people of Naphtali, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:

43 those listed of the tribe of Naphtali were 53,400.

44 These are those who were listed,
whom Moses and Aaron listed with the help of the chiefs of Israel, twelve men, each representing his fathers’ house. 

45 So all those listed of the people of Israel, by their fathers’ houses, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war in Israel—

46 all those listed were 603,550.

**Levites Exempted**

47 But the Levites were not listed along with them by their ancestral tribe. 

48 For the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Only the tribe of Levi you shall not list, and you shall not take a census of them among the people of Israel.

49 But appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings, and over all that belongs to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it and shall camp around the tabernacle. 

50 When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death. 

51 The people of Israel shall pitch their tents by their companies, each man in his own camp and each man by his own standard. 

52 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony.”

53 Thus did the people of Israel; they did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

**Arrangement of the Camp**

The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, “The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers’ houses. They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side. 

Then those to camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah by their companies, the chief of the people of Judah being Nahshon the son of Amminadab, his company as listed being 74,600. Those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar, the chief of the people of Issachar being Nethanel the son of Zuar, his company as listed being 54,400. Then the tribe of Zebulun, the chief of the people of Zebulun being Eliab the son of Helon, his company as listed being 57,400.

All those listed of the camp of Judah, by their companies, were 186,400. They shall set out first on the march.

On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their companies, the chief of the people of Reuben being Elizur the son of Shedeur, his company as listed being 46,500. And those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon, the chief of the people of Simeon being Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, his company as listed being 59,300.

Then the tribe of Gad, the chief of the people of Gad being Eliasaph the son of Reuel, his company as listed being 45,650. All those listed of the camp of Reuben, by their companies, were 151,450. They shall set out second.

Then the tent of meeting shall set out, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; as they camp, so shall they set out, each in position, standard by standard.

On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their companies, the chief of the people of Ephraim being Elishama the son of Ammihud, his company as listed being 40,500. And next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh, the chief of the people of Manasseh being Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, his company as listed being 32,200.

Then the tribe of Benjamin, the chief of the people of Benjamin being
Abidan the son of Gideoni, his company as listed being 35,400. All those listed of the camp of Ephraim, by their companies, were 108,100. They shall set out third on the march.

“On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their companies, the chief of the people of Dan being Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, his company as listed being 62,700. And those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, the chief of the people of Asher being Pagiel the son of Ochran, his company as listed being 41,500. Then the tribe of Naphtali, the chief of the people of Naphtali being Ahira the son of Enan, his company as listed being 53,400. All those listed of the camp of Dan were 157,600. They shall set out last, standard by standard.”

These are the people of Israel as listed by their fathers’ houses. All those listed in the camps by their companies were 603,550. But the Levites were not listed among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses.

The LORD Wants Us with Him

Then the tent of meeting shall set out, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps. NUMBERS 2:17

Most of us Christians have heard the word glory in Bible verses enough that we have some picture of it in our mind’s eye. Glory surrounds the Lord’s presence. Often, the Bible describes the Lord’s glory as being awe-inspiring, even overpowering, for mortals. Other times, His glory is a blessing and even instructive, as it was when the glory of the Lord led the people of Israel through the wilderness: “In the pillar of the cloud He spoke to them” (Psalm 99:7).

God has called us to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus. He wants His people to be with Him and with His Son, who sits at His right hand. In forgiving us, He removes all that would keep us from entering and enjoying His glory. On the day He ordains, we will be brought into His presence and obtain the glory of Jesus.

In the meantime, we have the glory of Jesus, even though we can’t see it. Jesus set aside His glory so that He could be with us weak, mortal humans. Now, for us, His glory is hidden in our lives: behind the cross, under the bread and wine of Holy Communion, within the hearing of His promises to be with us always.

*Dear Lord, bless us with Your presence. Amen.*
The Command to Leave Horeb

These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. It is eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea. In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment to them, after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth and in Edrei. Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to explain this law, saying, “The Lord our God said to us in Horeb, ‘You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Turn and take your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland and in the Negeb and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them.’

Leaders Appointed

“At that time I said to you, ‘I am not able to bear you by myself. The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are today as numerous as the stars of heaven. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are and bless you, as he has promised you!’ How can I bear by myself the weight and burden of you and your strife? Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads.’ And you answered me, ‘The thing that you have spoken is good for us to do.’ So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and set them as heads over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officers, throughout your tribes. And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the cases between your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien who is with him. You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God’s. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’ And I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do.

Israel’s Refusal to Enter the Land

“Then we set out from Horeb and went through all that great and terrifying wilderness that you saw, on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us. And we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said to you, ‘You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. Do not fear or be dismayed.’ Then all of you came near me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, that they may explore the land for us and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up and
the cities into which we shall come.’

23 The thing seemed good to me, and I took twelve men from you, one man from each tribe. 24 And they turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol and spied it out. 25 And they took in their hands some of the fruit of the land and brought it down to us, and brought us word again and said, ‘It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us.’

26 “Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. 27 And you murmured in your tents and said, ‘Because the LORD hated us he has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Where are we going up? Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, “The people are greater and taller than we. The cities are great and fortified up to heaven. And besides, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.”’ 29 Then I said to you, ‘Do not be in dread or afraid of them.

30 The LORD your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.’ 32 Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the LORD your God, 33 who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, to show you by what way you should go.

The Penalty for Israel’s Rebellion

34 “And the LORD heard your words and was angered, and he swore, 35 ‘Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land on which he has trodden, because he has wholly followed the LORD!’

37 Even with me the LORD was angry on your account and said, ‘You also shall not go in there. 38 Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. 40 But as for you, turn, and journey into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea. ’

41 “Then you answered me, ‘We have sinned against the LORD. We ourselves will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.’ And every one of you fastened on his weapons of war and thought it easy to go up into the hill country.

42 And the LORD said to me, ‘Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not in your midst, lest you be defeated before your enemies.’ 43 So I spoke to you, and you would not listen; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD and presumptuously went up into the hill country. 44 Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in Seir as far as Hormah.

45 And you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD did not listen to your voice or give ear to you.

46 So you remained at Kadesh many days, the days that you remained there.

The Wilderness Years

2 Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea, as the LORD told me. And for many days we traveled around Mount Seir. 3 Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have been traveling around this mountain country long enough. Turn northward 4 and command the people, “You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers, the people of Esau, who
DEUTERONOMY 2:5

live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful. 3 Do not con-
tend with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as for
the sole of the foot to tread on, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a pos-
session. 4 You shall purchase food from them with money, that you may
eat, and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink.
5 For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows
your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has
been with you. You have lacked nothing. ’ 6 So we went on, away from our
brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road from
Elath and Ezion-geber.

“And we turned and went in the di-
rection of the wilderness of Moab. 8 And
the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass
Moab or contend with them in battle,
for I will not give you any of their land
for a possession, because I have given
Ar to the people of Lot for a posses-
sion.’ 10 (The Emim formerly lived there,
a people great and many, and tall as the
Anakim. 11 Like the Anakim they are also
counted as Rephaim, but the Moabites
call them Emim. 12 The Horites also
lived in Seir formerly, but the people
of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed
them from before them and settled in
their place, as Israel did to the land of
their possession, which the
Lord gave
to them.) 13 ‘Now rise up and go over
the brook Zered.’ So we went over the
brook Zered. 14 And the time from our
leaving Kadesh-barnea until we crossed
the brook Zered was thirty-eight years,
until the entire generation, that is, the

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GATEWAY TO THE WEST

The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He
knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD
your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing. DEUTERONOMY 2:7

The Gateway Arch in St. Louis was completed in 1965, more than 150 years after
the beginning of the westward movement in the United States. Horace Greeley’s
“Go West, young man! Go West!” became a clarion cry that rang out across this
nation. Many of these westward-bound people passed through the heartland city
of St. Louis, “The Gateway to the West.” The nation would never be the same. The
630-foot Arch stands as a monument to that expansion.

The Bible is filled with examples of how our gracious God opened up new oppor-
tunities for His people. Abraham was worshiping idols (Joshua 24:1–13) when God
called him to leave his hometown and go into the Promised Land. There He blessed
him with many descendants, one of whom would be our Savior. Jesus Himself left
His throne in heaven to dwell among us, to die, and to rise again to give us new
life in Him.

In this second chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses recalled God’s gracious care as He
led His people through the wilderness back to the Promised Land. The people had
not always believed God’s love for them, yet He had never failed them. When times
are hard, we, too, struggle to believe God’s love, but the cross of Jesus stands fast as
a monument to His love and grace.

O God, You have a gracious plan for us in Christ Jesus;
help us to grasp it in faith. In Jesus’ name. Amen.
men of war, had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. 

15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the camp, until they had perished.

16 So as soon as all the men of war had perished and were dead from among the people, 17 the LORD said to me, 18 ‘Today you are to cross the border of Moab at Ar. 19 And when you approach the territory of the people of Ammon, do not harass them or contend with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.’ 20 (It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim— 21 a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites, 22 and they dispossessed them and settled in their place, 23 as he did for the people of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them and they dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day. 24 As for the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and settled in their place.) 25 ‘Rise up, set out on your journey and go over the Valley of the Arnon. Behold, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to take possession, and contend with him in battle. 26 This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you on the peoples who are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.’

The Defeat of King Sihon

26 ‘So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon the king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, 27 ‘Let me pass through your land. I will go only by the road; I will turn aside neither to the right nor to the left. 28 You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink. Only let me pass through on foot, 29 as the sons of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I go over the Jordan into the land that the LORD our God is giving to us.’ 30 But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that he might give him into your hand, as he is this day. 31 And the LORD said to me, ‘Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to take possession, that you may occupy his land.’ 32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Jahaz. 33 And the LORD our God gave him over to us, and we defeated him and his sons and all his people. 34 And we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction 2 every city , men, women, and children. We left no survivors. 35 Only the livestock we took as spoil for ourselves, with the plunder of the cities that we captured. 36 From Arroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and from the city that is in the valley, as far as Gilead, there was not a city too high for us. The LORD our God gave all into our hands. 37 Only to the land of the sons of Ammon you did not draw near, that is, to all the banks of the river Jabbok and the cities of the hill country, whatever the LORD our God had forbidden us.

The Defeat of King Og

3 Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan. And Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 2 But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I have given him and all his people and
DEUTERONOMY 3:3

his land into your hand. And you shall do to him as you did to Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.’

3 So the LORD our God gave into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people, and we struck him down until he had no survivor left. 4 And we took all his cities at that time—there was not a city that we did not take from them—sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides very many unwalled villages. 6 And we devoted them to destruction, as we did to Sihon the king of Heshbon, devoting to destruction every city, men, women, and children. 7 But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as our plunder. 8 So we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, while the Amorites call it Senir), 10 all the cities of the tableland and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 11 (For only Og the king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim. Behold, his bed was a bed of iron. Is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits’ was its length, and four cubits its breadth, according to the common cubit.’)

12 “When we took possession of this land at that time, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory beginning at Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead with its cities. 13 The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, that is, all the region of Argob, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (All that portion of Bashan is called the land of Rephaim. 14 Jair the Manassite took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called the villages after his own name, Havvoth-jair, as it is to this day.)

15 To Machir I gave Gilead, 16 and to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave the territory from Gilead as far as the Valley of the Arnon, with the middle of the valley as a border, as far over as the river Jabbok, the border of the Ammonites; 17 the Arabah also, with the Jordan as the border, from Chinnereth as far as the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

18 “And I commanded you at that time, saying, ‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All your men of valor shall cross over armed before your brothers, the people of Israel. 19 Only your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall remain in the cities that I have given you, 20 until the LORD gives rest to your brothers, as to you, and they also occupy the land that the LORD your God gives them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.’

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings. So will the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you are crossing. 22 You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.’

Moses Forbidden to Enter the Land

23 “And I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, ‘O Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours? 25 Please let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.’

1 That is, set apart (devoted) as an offering to the Lord (for destruction); twice in this verse
2 A cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters · 3 Hebrew cubit of a man

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the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘Enough from you; do not speak to me of this matter again. 27 Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and look at it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. 28 But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall go over at the head of this people, and he shall put them in possession of the land that you shall see.’ 29 So we remained in the valley opposite Beth-peor.

Moses Commands Obedience

4 “And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. 2 You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. 3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor. 4 But you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive today.

LEADER INTO THE PROMISED LAND

But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, “Enough from you; do not speak to Me of this matter again.” DEUTERONOMY 3:26

Moses was a great man. God called him to bring the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. He led the people for forty years through the desert and performed many miracles. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and revealed His personal name to him.

But God did not let Moses lead His people into the Promised Land. Why? Because Moses had sinned; he did not believe God and failed to uphold His holiness at Kadesh (Numbers 20:1–13).

There is more here than meets the eye. Moses is forever associated with God’s Law. The Law’s demand is relentless and unbending. And though God’s Law can point out sin, it has no power to forgive or remove it. God’s Law will never get us into God’s kingdom.

Enter Joshua. Joshua believed God and trusted His promises throughout the long exodus. God called Joshua to lead His people into the Promised Land.

Joshua points us to Christ. In fact, the name Joshua is a form of the name Jesus, which means “the Lord saves.” Jesus remained faithful to God even unto death. He died and rose again to bring us into God’s kingdom.

Dear Lord, lead me and all Your people safely into Your promised kingdom. Amen.
God Commissions Joshua

After the death of Moses the servant of the \textit{Lord}, the \textit{Lord} said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, “Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the \textit{Lord} your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua Assumes Command

And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, “Pass through the

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the \textit{Lord} your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Strong and Courageous

In Joshua 1, a theme is echoed: be strong and courageous. God is giving Joshua a pep talk as this mighty leader prepares to replace Moses. God tells Joshua to be strong and courageous—there’s a lot of Promised Land to be won. Be strong and courageous—hold fast to the Law. As encouragement to this tall order, the Israelites chime in, telling Joshua to be strong and courageous—for they will follow him as they followed Moses. (Hopefully, their track record will be better than that of their parents!) But I skipped over the best of this repeating theme. In verse 9, God gives Joshua a promise: the \textit{Lord} is with you.

The \textit{Lord} is with you too, saint. Be strong and courageous—co-workers will mock your faith. Be strong and courageous—your spouse needs your support during these medical tests. Be strong and courageous—these financial burdens may linger. Remember: God is the one who gives you strength to be courageous. And God is with you because His Son, Jesus, was strong and courageous on the cross, making you a saint.

Lord, enable me to be strong and courageous; remind me You are with me wherever I go. Amen.
Joshua 1:12

midst of the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.’”

12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, 13 “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.’ 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, 15 until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

16 And they answered Joshua, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you, as he was with Moses! 18 Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

Rahab Hides the Spies

2 And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. 2 And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” 3 Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, “True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. 5 And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” 6 But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. 7 So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

8 Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof 9 and said to the men, “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. 11 And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. 12 Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign 13 that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” 14 And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to
Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. At the end of three days the officers went through the camp and commanded the people, “As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.”

Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” And Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

The Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, ‘When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.”’

And Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” And Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

The Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, ‘When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.”’

And Joshua said to the people of Israel, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God.”

And Joshua said, “Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a
man. And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the \textsc{Lord}, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”

So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the \textsc{Lord} stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

**Twelve Memorial Stones from the Jordan**

When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the \textsc{Lord} said to Joshua, “Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests’ feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.’” Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. And Joshua said to them, “Pass on before the ark of the \textsc{Lord} your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, ‘that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the \textsc{Lord}. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.’”

And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the \textsc{Lord} told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day. For the priests bearing the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the \textsc{Lord} commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua.

The people passed over in haste. And when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the \textsc{Lord} and the priests passed over before the people. The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had told them. About 40,000 ready for war passed over before the \textsc{Lord} for battle, to the plains of Jericho. On that day the \textsc{Lord} exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

And the \textsc{Lord} said to Joshua, “Command the priests bearing the ark
of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan.” 17 So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” 18 And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

19 The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. 21 And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ 22 then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ 23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, 24 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”

The New Generation Circumcised

5 As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel.

2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time.”

So Joshua of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan. ” 17 So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” 18 And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

19 The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. 21 And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ 22 then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ 23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, 24 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”

The Purpose of Monuments

And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the LORD told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. JOSHUA 4:8

After safely passing through the waters of the Jordan River, Joshua and the Israelites built two stone monuments. One stood on dry ground; the other stood in the middle of the river itself. The purpose for them is revealed in Joshua’s words: “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever” (Joshua 4:21–24).

God’s Word is a living monument to all the mighty acts He continually does for us, especially how He has, through Jesus, delivered us from sin, death, and Satan. God’s Word remains true from generation to generation. Remembering God’s goodness inspires us to “tell of all His wondrous works!” (Psalm 105:2) so that all might know salvation is found in Christ alone.

Lord, help us to remember and proclaim Your great actions on our behalf, especially the forgiveness and daily renewal You grant to us through faith in Jesus. Amen.