

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Divine Majesty and Human Dignity

A Psalm of David.

O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;

what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,

all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,

the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

Psalm 8 (cont'd)

O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Song of Songs 2:11-13

Spring:

...for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

Spring:

The Parable of the Growing Seed

He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,

and would sleep and rise night and day,
and the seed would sprout and grow,
he does not know how.

The earth produces of itself, first the stalk,
then the head, then the full grain in the head.

Psalm 65:9-13

You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;

the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it.

You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,

softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.

Psalm 65:9-13 (cont'd)

You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

The pastures of the wilderness overflow,

the hills gird themselves with joy,

the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,

the valleys deck themselves with grain,

they shout and sing together for joy.

Do not fear, you animals of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
the tree bears its fruit,
the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

O children of Zion, be glad
and rejoice in the Lord your God;
for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
he has poured down for you abundant rain,
the early and the later rain, as before.
The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

Winter:

The Marvels of Nature

By his command he sends the driving snow
and speeds the lightnings of his judgement.

Therefore the storehouses are opened,
and the clouds fly out like birds.

In his majesty he gives the clouds their strength,
and the hailstones are broken in pieces.

The voice of his thunder rebukes the earth;
when he appears, the mountains shake.
At his will the south wind blows;

Winter:

At his will the south wind blows;
so do the storm from the north and the whirlwind.

He scatters the snow like birds flying down,
and its descent is like locusts alighting.

The eye is dazzled by the beauty of its whiteness,
and the mind is amazed as it falls.

He pours frost over the earth like salt,
and icicles form like pointed thorns.

Winter:

The cold north wind blows,
and ice freezes on the water;

it settles on every pool of water,
and the water puts it on like a breastplate.

He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilderness,
and withers the tender grass like fire.

A mist quickly heals all things;
the falling dew gives refreshment from the heat.

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

The Annunciation

Luke 1:26-28

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

The virgin's name was Mary.
And he came to her and said,
'Greetings, favoured one!
The Lord is with you.'

Exodus 3

The Call of Moses:

Moses at the Burning Bush

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law
Jethro, the priest of Midian;
he led his flock beyond the wilderness,
and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
There the angel of the Lord appeared to him
in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked,
and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

Moses at the Burning Bush

Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and
look at this great sight,
and see why the bush is not burned up.'

When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see,
God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!'

And he said, 'Here I am.'

Then he said, 'Come no closer!

Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'

He said further,

'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.

The Call of Moses: Moses at the Burning Bush

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt;

I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters.

Indeed, I know their sufferings,

and I have come down to deliver them from 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 country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them.

The Call of Moses:

Moses at the Burning Bush

So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'

But Moses said to God, '

Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'

He said, 'I will be with you;

and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain

The Call of Moses:

The Divine Name Revealed

But Moses said to God,

‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them,

“The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”,

and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’

God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am.’

He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites,

“I am has sent me to you.” ’ God also said to Moses, ‘

Thus you shall say to the Israelites,

“The Lord, the God of your ancestors,

the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,

and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you”:

This is my name for ever,

and this my title for all generations.

The Call of Moses:

Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them,
"The Lord, the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,
has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you
and to what has been done to you in Egypt.

I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery 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."

They will listen to your voice; and you and the elders of Israel
shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him,

"The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us;
let us now go a three days' journey into the wilderness,
so that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God."

The Call of Moses:

I know, however,
that the king of Egypt will not let you go
unless compelled by a mighty hand.
So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt
with all my wonders that I will perform in it;
after that he will let you go.
I will bring this people into such favour
with the Egyptians that, when you go,
you will not go empty-handed;
each woman shall ask her neighbour
and any woman living in the neighbour's house
for jewellery of silver and of gold, and clothing,
and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters;
and so you shall plunder the Egyptians.'

How to Pray

'When you are praying,
do not heap up empty phrases
as the Gentiles do;
for they think that they will be heard
because of their many words.

Do not be like them,
for your Father knows what you need
before you ask him.

'Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

The Baptism of Jesus

And when Jesus had been baptized,
just as he came up from the water,
suddenly the heavens were opened to him
and he saw the Spirit of God
descending like a dove and alighting on him.

And a voice from heaven said,
'This is my Son, the Beloved,
with whom I am well pleased.'

The Annunciation

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

The virgin's name was Mary.
And he came to her and said,
'Greetings, favoured one!
The Lord is with you.'

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The Annunciation

The angel said to her,
'Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favour with God.
And now, you will conceive in your womb
and bear a son,
and you will name him Jesus.
He will be great,
and will be called the Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give to him
the throne of his ancestor David.
He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

The Annunciation

Mary said to the angel,
'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'

The angel said to her,
'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;
therefore the child to be born will be holy;
he will be called Son of God.

And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age
has also conceived a son;
and this is the sixth month
for her who was said to be barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God.'

Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word.'

Then the angel departed from her.

The Annunciation

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has also conceived a son;
and this is the sixth month
for her who was said to be barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God.'
Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word.'

Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:39-45

Mary Visits Elizabeth: The Visitation

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry,

Mary Visits Elizabeth: The Visitation

'Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
And why has this happened to me,
that the mother of my Lord comes to me?
For as soon as I heard the sound of your
greeting,
the child in my womb leapt for joy.

And blessed is she who believed
that there would be a fulfilment
of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

Luke 2:8-20

The Shepherds and the Angels

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields,
keeping watch over their flock by night.

Then an angel of the Lord stood before them,
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,
and they were terrified.

The Shepherds and the Angels

And suddenly there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly host,
praising God and saying,
'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among
those whom he favours!'

The Shepherds and the Angels

But the angel said to them,
'Do not be afraid; for see—
I am bringing you good news of great joy
for all the people:

to you is born this day in the city of David
a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign for you:
you will find a child wrapped in
bands of cloth and lying in a manger.'

The Shepherds and the Angels

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,
the shepherds said to one another,
'Let us go now to Bethlehem and
see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us.'

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph,
and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known
what had been told them about this child;

and all who heard it were amazed
at what the shepherds told them.

The Shepherds and the Angels

But Mary treasured all these words
and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
as it had been told them.

The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among
those whom he favours!

The Return to Nazareth: The Holy Family

When they had finished everything
required by the law of the Lord,
they returned to Galilee,
to their own town of Nazareth.

The child grew and became strong,
filled with wisdom;
and the favour of God was upon him.

Jesus in the Synagogue

When he came to Nazareth,
where he had been brought up,
he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day,
as was his custom.

He stood up to read,
and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah
was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll
and found the place where it was written:

Jesus in the Synagogue

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Jesus in the Synagogue

And he rolled up the scroll,
gave it back to the attendant,
and sat down.

The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Then he began to say to them,
'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'
All spoke well of him and were amazed
at the gracious words that came from his mouth.

They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?'

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.

And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.

When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends.

When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

When his parents saw him they were astonished;
and his mother said to him,
'Child, why have you treated us like this?

Look, your father and I have been searching for you
in great anxiety.'

He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me?
Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'

But they did not understand what he said to them.

Who is the greatest?

When the ten heard this,
they began to be angry with James and John.

So Jesus called them and said to them,

'You know that among the Gentiles

those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them,
and their great ones are tyrants over them.

But it is not so among you;

but whoever wishes to become great among you
must be your servant,

and whoever wishes to be first among you
must be slave of all.

For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life a ransom for many.'

True Greatness

An argument arose among them
as to which one of them was the greatest.

But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts,
took a little child and put it by his side,
and said to them,
'Whoever welcomes this child in my name
welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me;
for the least among all of you is the greatest.'

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and said to them,
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and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me;
for the least among all of you is the greatest.'

Jesus Blesses Little Children

People were bringing little children to him
in order that he might touch them;
and the disciples spoke sternly to them.

But when Jesus saw this,
he was indignant and said to them,
'Let the little children come to me;
do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the
kingdom of God belongs.

Jesus Blesses Little Children

Truly I tell you,
whoever does not receive the kingdom of God
as a little child will never enter it.'

And he took them up in his arms,
laid his hands on them,
and blessed them.

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,
that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed

took a loaf of bread,
and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said,
'This is my body that is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way
he took the cup also, after supper, saying,
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.'

For as often as you eat this bread
and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

After these things
Jesus showed himself again to the disciples
by the Sea of Tiberias;
and he showed himself in this way.
Gathered there together were Simon Peter,
Thomas called the Twin,
Nathanael of Cana in Galilee,
the sons of Zebedee,
and two others of his disciples.

Simon Peter said to them,
'I am going fishing.'
They said to him, 'We will go with you.'
They went out and got into the boat,
but that night they caught nothing.

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

Just after daybreak,
Jesus stood on the beach;
but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to them,
'Children, you have no fish, have you?'

They answered him, 'No.'

He said to them,
'Cast the net to the right side of the boat,
and you will find some.'

So they cast it,
and now they were not able to haul it in
because there were so many fish.
That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter,
'It is the Lord!'

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

When they had gone ashore,
they saw a charcoal fire there,
with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them,
'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.'

So Simon Peter went aboard
and hauled the net ashore,
full of large fish,
a hundred and fifty-three of them;
and though there were so many,
the net was not torn.

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord,
he put on some clothes,
for he was naked,
and jumped into the lake.

But the other disciples came in the boat,
dragging the net full of fish,
for they were not far from the land,
only about a hundred yards off.

Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

Jesus said to them,

'Come and have breakfast.'

Now none of the disciples dared to ask him,
'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord.

Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them,
and did the same with the fish.

This was now the third time that Jesus appeared
to the disciples
after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

When it was evening on that day,
the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house
where the disciples had met
were locked for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood among them and said,
'Peace be with you.'
After he said this,
he showed them his hands and his side.
Then the disciples rejoiced
when they saw the Lord.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Jesus said to them again,
'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me,
so I send you.'

When he had said this,
he breathed on them and said to them,

'Receive the Holy Spirit.
If you forgive the sins of any,
they are forgiven them;
if you retain the sins of any,
they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin),
one of the twelve,
was not with them when Jesus came.
So the other disciples told him,
'We have seen the Lord.'
But he said to them,
'Unless I see the mark
of the nails in his hands,
and put my finger in the mark of the nails
and my hand in his side,
I will not believe.'

Jesus and Thomas

A week later his disciples were again in the house,
and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were shut,
Jesus came and stood among them and said,
'Peace be with you.'

Then he said to Thomas,
'Put your finger here and see my hands.
Reach out your hand and put it in my side.
Do not doubt but believe.'

Jesus and Thomas

Thomas answered him,
'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus said to him,
'Have you believed because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe.'

The Help of the Holy Spirit

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness;
for we do not know how to pray as we ought,
but that very Spirit intercedes
with sighs too deep for words.

And God, who searches the heart,
knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes for the saints
according to the will of God.

The Call of Abram

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country
and your kindred
and your father's house
to the land that I will show you.

I will make of you a great nation,
and I will bless you, and make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,
and the one who curses you I will curse;
and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

The Call of Abram

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him;
and Lot went with him.

Abram was seventy-five years old
when he departed from Haran.

Abram took his wife Sarai
and his brother's son Lot,
and all the possessions that they had gathered,
and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran;
and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan.
When they had come to the land of Canaan,
Abram passed through the land
to the place at Shechem,
to the oak of Moreh.

The Call of Abram

At that time the Canaanites were in the land.
Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said,
'To your offspring I will give this land.'
So he built there an altar to the Lord,
who had appeared to him.
From there he moved on to the hill country
on the east of Bethel,
and pitched his tent,
with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east;
and there he built an altar to the Lord
and invoked the name of the Lord.
And Abram journeyed on
by stages towards the Negeb.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

Now there was a famine in the land.
So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien,
for the famine was severe in the land.

When he was about to enter Egypt,
he said to his wife Sarai,
'I know well that you are a woman beautiful in appearance;
and when the Egyptians see you,
they will say, "This is his wife";
then they will kill me, but they will let you live.
Say you are my sister,
so that it may go well with me because of you,
and that my life may be spared on your account.'

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.

When the officials of Pharaoh saw her,
they praised her to Pharaoh.
And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

And for her sake he dealt well with Abram;
and he had sheep,
oxen, male donkeys,
male and female slaves,
female donkeys, and camels.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

So Pharaoh called Abram, and said,

What is this you have done to me?

Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?

Why did you say, "She is my sister",
so that I took her for my wife?

Now then, here is your wife;

take her, and be gone.'

And Pharaoh gave his men orders
concerning him;

and they set him on the way,
with his wife and all that he had.

The Call of Moses:

Moses at the Burning Bush

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Jethro, the priest of Midian;
he led his flock beyond the wilderness,
and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
There the angel of the Lord appeared to him
in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked,
and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

Moses at the Burning Bush

Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and
look at this great sight,
and see why the bush is not burned up.'

When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see,
God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!'

And he said, 'Here I am.'

Then he said, 'Come no closer!

Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'

He said further,

'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.

Moses at the Burning Bush

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt;

I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters.

Indeed, I know their sufferings,

and I have come down to deliver them from 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 country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them.

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So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'

But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'

He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain

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The Divine Name Revealed

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God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.'

He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites,
"I am has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, '

Thus you shall say to the Israelites,
"The Lord, the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you":

This is my name for ever,
and this my title for all generations.

The Divine Name Revealed

But Moses said to God,

'If I come to the Israelites and say to them,
"The God of your ancestors has sent me to you",
and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to
them?'

God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.'

He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites,
"I am has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, '

Thus you shall say to the Israelites,
"The Lord, the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac,
and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you":

This is my name for ever,
and this my title for all generations.

The Call of Moses:

Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them,
"The Lord, the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,
has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you
and to what has been done to you in Egypt.

I declare that I will bring you up out of the misery 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."

They will listen to your voice; and you and the elders of Israel
shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him,

"The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us;
let us now go a three days' journey into the wilderness,
so that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God."

The Call of Moses:

I know, however,
that the king of Egypt will not let you go
unless compelled by a mighty hand.
So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt
with all my wonders that I will perform in it;
after that he will let you go.
I will bring this people into such favour
with the Egyptians that, when you go,
you will not go empty-handed;
each woman shall ask her neighbour
and any woman living in the neighbour's house
for jewellery of silver and of gold, and clothing,
and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters;
and so you shall plunder the Egyptians.'

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

Now the boy Samuel was
ministering to the Lord under Eli.

The word of the Lord was rare in those days;
visions were not widespread.

At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim
so that he could not see,
was lying down in his room;
the lamp of God had not yet gone out,
and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord,
where the ark of God was.

Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!'
and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli,
and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.'
But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.'

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

The Lord called again,
'Samuell!' Samuel got up and went to Eli,
and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.'
But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.'

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord,
and the word of the Lord had
not yet been revealed to him.
The Lord called Samuel again, a third time.
And he got up and went to Eli, and said,
'Here I am, for you called me.'

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy.

Therefore Eli said to Samuel,
'Go, lie down;
and if he calls you, you shall say,
"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

Now the Lord came and stood there,
calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!'

And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

Then the Lord said to Samuel,
'See, I am about to do something in Israel
that will make both ears
of anyone who hears of it tingle.

On that day I will fulfil against Eli
all that I have spoken concerning his house,
from beginning to end.

For I have told him that
I am about to punish his house for ever,
for the iniquity that he knew,
because his sons were blaspheming God,
and he did not restrain them.

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

Therefore I swear to the house of Eli
that the iniquity of Eli's house
shall not be expiated
by sacrifice or offering for ever.'
Samuel lay there until morning;
then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord.
Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.
But Eli called Samuel and said,
'Samuel, my son.' He said, 'Here I am.'
Eli said, 'What was it that he told you?
Do not hide it from me.'

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

As Samuel grew up,
the Lord was with him
and let none of his words fall to the ground.
And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba
knew that Samuel was
a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.
The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh,
for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel
at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

In the fifteenth year
of the reign of Emperor Tiberius,
when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,
and Herod was ruler of Galilee,
and his brother Philip
ruler of the region of Ituraea
and Trachonitis,
and Lysanias ruler of Abilene,
during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,
the word of God came to John
son of Zechariah
in the wilderness.

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

He went into all the region around the Jordan,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance
for the forgiveness of sins,
as it is written in the book of the words
of the prophet Isaiah,
'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see
the salvation of God." '

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

Once while Jesus was standing
beside the lake of Gennesaret,
and the crowd was pressing in on him
to hear the word of God,
he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake;
the fishermen had gone out of them
and were washing their nets.
He got into one of the boats,
the one belonging to Simon,
and asked him to put out a little way from the shore.
Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.
When he had finished speaking,
he said to Simon,
'Put out into the deep water
and let down your nets for a catch.'

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.'

When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them.

And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!'

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

For he (Peter) and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

Then Jesus said to Simon,
'Do not be afraid;
from now on you will be catching people.'
When they had brought their boats to shore,
they left everything and followed him.

Jesus' Two Great Commandments

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?'

He said to him,

' "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

This is the greatest and first commandment.

And a second is like it:

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'