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For study the week of **August 10 - 16, 2015**

Biblical background on this week's Bible Lesson verses

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“Go out with Joy” (Isaiah 55:12) from *Treasures of the Bible* by Henry Davenport Northrop, D.D.

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Deuteronomy 10:12-14 (21) | ►

- 12 And now, Israel, **what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,** (KJV)
- 13 **To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?** (KJV)
- 14 **Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.** (KJV)

(V12) "The summarizing 'and now' leads on to a statement of the twin obligations: to be aware ('fear,' 'love') and to obey ('walk,' 'serve'). The formulation is reminiscent of Micah 6:8. Its tone suggests that this obligation is not some high-flown idealism beyond human attainment, but a practical possibility. To 'serve God' is both to worship and to obey; the one cannot be separated from the other. The same combination is of course implicit in our English usage: 'a service of worship.'" (ITC) (V13) "Israel was to serve the Lord with unreserved and unqualified devotion, one that marked them out as God's peculiar people who had been made his servant nation in achieving his redemptive purposes. Specifically, this service consists of observing the Lord's commands and decrees. Service is not abstract or vacuous, then, but in covenant relational terms it speaks of strict conformity to precise stipulations." (NAC) (V14) *Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens*) "All these words in the original are in the plural number: behold the heavens and the heavens of heavens. But what do they mean? To say that the first means the atmosphere, the second the planetary system, and the third the region of the blessed, is saying but very little in the way of explanation. The words were probably intended to point out the immensity of God's creation, in which we may readily conceive one system of heavenly bodies, and others beyond them, and others still in endless progression through the whole vortex of space, every star in the vast abyss of nature being a sun, with its peculiar and numerous attendant worlds! Thus there may be systems of systems in endless gradation up to the throne of God!" (CLARKE)

Deuteronomy 18:13 (22) | ►

- 13 **Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.** (KJV)

"In these verses [Deuteronomy 18:9-22] all the forbidden practices — called **detestable ways of the nations** in the land — dealt with either foretelling the future or magic. By the use of magic one attempted to manipulate or force the "gods" into certain courses of action.....Such **detestable practices** were one reason the Lord used Israel to destroy the Canaanites. Therefore it was understandably **detestable** for an Israelite to become involved in those things. By avoiding them the Israelites would be **blameless** of their terrible sins." (BKC) "To maintain their possession of the promised land, the Israelites were to be *perfect before the Lord*. In these verses, the essence of the covenant tradition appears once again. The covenant promise of the Lord held forth the gift of the land, but the continuing possession of the land would be dependent upon the Israelite's faithfulness to their covenant obligations, namely, that obedience which would make them perfect (or blameless)." (NICOT)

Deuteronomy 33:12,27 (11) | ►

- 12 *And of Benjamin he said,* **The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.** (KJV)
- 27 **The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms:** and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*. (KJV)

(V12) *Between his shoulders*) "Moses asked that Benjamin as the one loved of the Lord and shielded continually by him would have a secure rest between the Lord's shoulders, that is, on his shoulders, as a father might carry a son—a figure already used to describe how the Lord carried the Israelites all through the desert journeys (1:31)" (EBC) (V27) *Everlasting arms*) "As the arm is the emblem of power, and of power in a state of exertion, the words here state that an unlimited and

unconquerable power shall be eternally exerted in the defense of God's Church, and in the behalf of all those who trust in Him." (CLARKE)

Exodus 3:13,14 (3) | ▶

- 13 **And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?** (KJV)
- 14 **And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.** (KJV)

(V13) *What is his name?* "For ancient Eastern thought the name of the person who existed was a necessary part of his existence and one knew of a reality only if one was able to pronounce its 'name'. This presents no problem for J, as he has made use of the divine name Yahweh right from the beginning of his narrative and has also at least from Genesis 4:26 onwards presumed that this name is known among men. E, who usually uses the word 'God' instead of this name, is in a different position. In his narrative the God who appeared to Moses had first appeared without a name or just as 'God of the Fathers'; the question about his name therefore has some point." (OTL) (V14) "Exodus 3:14 is one of the most puzzled over verses in the entire Hebrew Bible. The name given consists of the repeated verb 'to be', in the first person singular plus the relative particle (actually, Yahweh is a third person form). The most common translation is that given in the NRSV, 'I AM WHO I AM.' Other translations included: 'I will be what (who) I will be'; 'I will cause to be what I will cause to be'; 'I will be who I am/I am who I will be.' The last-noted seems to be the best option, in essence: I will be God for you. The force is not simply that God is or that God is present but that God will be faithfully God for them....wherever God is being God, God will be the kind of God, God is." (IBC) "God here introduces his name to Moses, first of all by giving an interpretation of it, and then by declaring it openly. In the Hebrew the name was originally written without vowels, as YHWH, and was most probably pronounced Yahweh. This could be interpreted as a verb meaning 'He causes to be', although it is very questionable whether this was the real etymology of the name. Most probably the author of the account did not know its real origin, and simply used its similarity in sound and appearance to the Hebrew verb 'to be' a point to be explained...Since the Hebrew verb could be taken as either a present or future tense, the divine self-designation contains a strong overtone of future action." (CBC)

Genesis 37:3,4,24,28 (14) | ▶

- 3 **Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.** (KJV)
- 4 **And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.** (KJV)
- 24 **And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.** (KJV)
- 28 **Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.** (KJV)

(V3) "The theme of suffering as a test of character is predominant, both for Joseph and his brothers. Though Joseph was righteous he was not kept from suffering. He was preserved by his faith through it. In the end Joseph could acknowledge that God meant it all for good (Genesis 50:20). The Bible's wisdom literature assures the faithful that God brings good out of evil and suffering. Though the wicked may prosper for a time, the righteous hold fast to their integrity because there is a higher, more enduring principle of life (cf. the Book of Job). The wise recognize that the Lord God is sovereign over nature and the nations, and that He righteously orders the affairs of His people. At times God's ways seem unfair and paradoxical, but if endured by faith they bring blessings to the righteous." (BKC) *son of his old age* "Benjamin being younger, was more the son of his old age and consequently on that ground might have been expected to be the favorite. Literally rendered, it is 'son of old age to him' - *Hebrew phrase*, for 'a wise son' - one who possessed observation and wisdom above his years - an old head on young shoulders. **made him a coat of many colors** — formed in those early days by sewing together patches of colored cloth, and considered a dress of distinction. The passion for various colors still reigns among the Arabs and other people of the East, who are fond of dressing their children in this gaudy attire. But since the art of interweaving various patterns was introduced, 'the coats of colors' are different now from what they seem to have been in patriarchal times, and bear a close resemblance to the varieties of tartan." (JFB) (V4) Joseph was "only seventeen, and

the eleventh of twelve sons. As he gradually grows older, his spiritual development becomes more compassionate and seeks to help others. Jacob presented Joseph with this tunic because, unlike the other brothers who tended the sheep, Joseph was always in attendance on Jacob. It was only fitting that Joseph be garbed beautifully when performing the mitzvah [**1.** any of the collection of 613 commandments **2.** any good or praiseworthy deed,” *Random House*] of serving his father.” (*Bereishis/Genesis* by Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz) “Jacob’s favoritism for his son Joseph may be explained as well by the special love he had for the boy’s mother (Genesis 29:30).” **(NNIBC)** (V24) “Quite literally we read in this verse: ‘They stripped him of his outer garments he had on’ ...the brothers, having accepted Reuben’s counsel not to kill Joseph outright, first strip him before casting him into the cistern where he will presumably die of hunger and exposure. (The long tunic)...is Joseph’s distinctive robe which, later spattered with blood, Jacob will accept as proof evident of his son’s death by predatory beasts somewhere on his journey.” **(Vawter, Bruce, On Genesis)** (V28) **PRONUNCIATIONS:** Midianites “(mid’ee-uh-nites) and Ishmeelites “(ish’mee-uh-lites), a general designation for the nomadic inhabitants of the Syrian and Arabian deserts,” **(HBD)** “The name **Midianites** is used interchangeably with the name Ishmaelites (Genesis 37:25), most likely indicating an alliance between the two peoples. Both terms refer to wandering Arab traders. **Twenty shekels of silver** may have been the going rate for a slave at the time. On the other hand, the Midianites may have paid a little less because they knew something was amiss (the standard price for a slave in later Israelite law was thirty shekels; Exodus 21:32). According to Genesis 42:21, Joseph begged his brothers not to sell him. The brothers considered Joseph as good as dead; he would never return from Egyptian slavery. The account would later be memorialized in song (Psalm 105:17), and the despicable act finds its parallel in the price paid to Judas for betraying the Savior.” **(NNIBC)**

Genesis 39:1-3 (15) | ▶

- 1** And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. *(KJV)*
- 2** And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. *(KJV)*
- 3** And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. *(KJV)*

(V1) **PRONUNCIATIONS:** Potiphar (pot’uh-fuhr); Pharaoh (fair’oh), “the Hebrew word for the title held by the king of Egypt. The Egyptian word meant ‘great house’ which was the name given to the royal palace,” **(HBD)** “Potiphar probably did not buy Joseph directly from the Ishmaelites who had brought him to Egypt. They probably sold him to a slave dealer from whom the actual purchase was made by one of Potiphar’s subordinates.” **(BSC)** (V2) “Verse 2 declares: ‘the Lord was with Joseph and he was a successful [prospering] man.’ The theological notion of the presence of the Lord, repeated so often in the Scriptures (and epitomized in the name Immanuel, ‘God with us’), is the reason for Joseph’s prosperity. The verse gives the cause (the presence of the Lord) and the effect (the prosperity). A study of the verb, ‘to prosper,’ is important to the exegesis of this passage; its meaning is helpfully clarified in the subsequent verses....this was not an ordinary prosperity – it was phenomenal and unexpected....” **(Ross, Allen, Creation and Blessing, A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis)** (V3) “Though changed in condition, Joseph was not changed in spirit; though stripped of the gaudy coat that had adorned his person, he had not lost the moral graces that distinguished his character; though separated from his father on earth, he still lived in communion with his Father in heaven; though in the house of an idolater, he continued a worshipper of the true God.” **(JFB)**

Genesis 47:1,7,28,29 (16) | ▶

- 1** Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. *(KJV)*
- 7** And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. *(KJV)*
- 28** And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. *(KJV)*
- 29** And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: *(KJV)*

(V1) "Joseph furnishes a beautiful example of a man who could bear equally well the extremes of prosperity and adversity. High as he was, he did not forget that he had a superior. Dearly as he loved his father and anxiously as he desired to provide for the whole family, he would not go into the arrangements he had planned for their stay in Goshen until he had obtained the sanction of his royal master." (JFB) (V7) Jacob is "said to have blessed Pharaoh, by this term Moses does not mean a common and profane salutation, but the pious and holy prayer of a servant of God. For the children of this world salute kings and princes for the sake of honor, but, by no means, raise their thoughts to God. Jacob acts otherwise; for he adjoins to civil reverence that pious affection which causes him to commend the safety of the king to God. And Jeremiah prescribes this rule to the Jews, that they should pray for the peace of Babylon as long as they were to live in exile; because in the peace of that land and empire their own peace would be involved. (Jeremiah 29:7.) If this duty was enjoined on miserable captives, forcibly deprived of their liberty, and torn from their own country; how much more did Jacob owe it to a king so humane and beneficent? But of whatever character they may be who rule over us, we are commanded to offer up public prayers for them. (1 Timothy 2:1.) Therefore the same subjection to authority is required severally from each of us." (CALCOM) (V28) *seventeen years* "Even though Jacob had been willing to die when he rejoined his son Joseph (Genesis 45:28; 46:30), God gave him a good number of years to enjoy his family." (NNIBC) (V29) *the time drew nigh that Israel must die* "One only of his dying arrangements is recorded; but that one reveals his whole character. It was the disposal of his remains, which were to be carried to Canaan, not from a mere romantic attachment to his native soil, nor, like his modern descendants, from a superstitious feeling for the soil of the Holy Land, but from faith in the promises. His address to Joseph – 'if now I have found grace in thy sight,' that is, as the vizier of Egypt - his exacting a solemn oath that his wishes would be fulfilled and the peculiar form of that oath, all pointed significantly to the promise and showed the intensity of his desire to enjoy its blessings." (JFB)

Genesis 50:15-17,19,21 (17) | ►

- 15** And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. (KJV)
- 16** And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, (KJV)
- 17** So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. (KJV)
- 19** And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? (KJV)
- 21** Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. (KJV)

(V15) "Joseph's brethren fear lest, Jacob being dead, Joseph will no longer restrain his desire for revenge. *requite*] Their conscience cannot leave them alone." (CAMB) (V16) *Thy father did command* "Whether he did or not we cannot tell. Some think they had feigned this story, but that is not so likely. Jacob might have had suspicions too, and might have thought that the best way to prevent evil was to humble themselves before their brother, and get a fresh assurance of his forgiveness." (CLARKE) (V17) "What a conjuration of pardon, says Bishop Hall, was this! What wound could be either so deep, or so festered, that this plaster could not cure? They say not the sons of thy father; for they knew Jacob was dead, and they had degenerated; but *the servants of thy father's God*: how much stronger are the bonds of religion than of nature? If Joseph had been rancorous, this deprecation had charmed him; but now it resolves him into tears! They are not so ready to acknowledge their old offence as he to protest his love; and if he chide them for any thing, it is for that they thought they needed to entreat him; since they might have known it could not stand with the fellow-servant of their father's God, to harbour maliciousness, or to purpose revenge." (COKE) (V19) *Am I in the place of God?* "These words may be understood either as a question, or an affirmative proposition. How should I take any farther notice of your transgression? I have passed it by, the matter lies now between God and you. Or, in the order of Divine providence I am now in God's place; he has furnished me with means, and made me a distributor of his bounty; I will therefore not only nourish you, but also your little ones, Genesis 50:21: and therefore he spake comfortably unto them, as in Genesis 45:8, telling them that he attributed the whole business to the particular providence of God rather than to any ill will or malice in them, and that, in permitting him to be brought into Egypt, God had graciously saved their lives, the life of their father, the lives of the people of Canaan, and of the Egyptians: as therefore God had honored him by making him vicegerent in the dispensations of his especial bounty towards so many people, it was impossible he should be displeased with the means by

which this was brought about.” (CLARKE) (V21) “This same sentiment is expressed in Paul’s letter to the Romans (8:28). God can take even the meanest intention and make it work for good for His devoted followers.” (*The Voice Commentary*) “Joseph’s response to his fearful brothers reveals his attitudes toward God and them (Genesis 50:18-21). He humbled himself under God’s authority. He regarded God as sovereign over him and the One who had providentially guided all the events of his life. He knew that God’s purposes for him, his family, and all people were good. Consequently he behaved with tender compassion toward his brothers. He proved to be his brothers’ keeper. Genesis opened with a couple, Adam and Eve, trying to become like God. It closes with a man, Joseph, denying that he is in God’s place.” (CONSTABLE)

Isaiah 61:1,10 (9) | ▶

- 1** The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*; (KJV)
- 10** I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels. (KJV)

(V1) “Anointing is a striking metaphor here. In Israel and elsewhere, people daubed priests and kings with olive oil as part of their consecration to holy office, and such daubing became a figure for Yahweh’s commissioning. Prophets were not anointed except in 1 Kings 19:16. Only in connection with David do the two ideas of anointing and Yahweh’s spirit come closely together. In effect, then, this prophet claims to be a David-like figure for the community, anointed (metaphorically) like David and endowed like David...Once again **preach good news**... suggests that the prophet also reckons to be the fulfillment of the commission and vision of heralds bringing good news to Jerusalem.” (NIBC) (V10) *My soul*) The speaker here, according to Knox, is Zion/Jerusalem. “The city sings of itself as vested with righteousness, adorned like bride and groom, and flourishing like a garden. Most of all, it is the framework ‘loyalty / righteousness / mutual love’ which distinguishes the renewed city.” (*Knox Preaching Guides*, John H. Hayes, Editor)

Isaiah 66:1,13 (10) | ▶

- 1** Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest? (KJV)
- 13** As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. (KJV)

(V1) “**The heaven is my throne** - The idea here is, that as God dwelt in the vast and distant heavens, no house that could be built on earth could be magnificent enough to be his abode. **The earth is my footstool** - A footstool is that which is placed under the feet when we sit. The idea here is, that God was so glorious that even the earth itself could be regarded only as his footstool.” (BARNES) (V13) “They depict the motherly side of God, who nurses, carries and bounces a child on his knees. Though God is neither male nor female, he expresses the qualities of both genders. This tender description wraps his people in the comfort and security of his eternal love.” (*Women of Faith Study Bible*)

Job 22:12 (1) | ▶

- 12** *Is not God in the height of heaven?* and behold the height of the stars, how high they are! (KJV)
- “Heaven - And from that high tower looketh down upon men, to behold, and govern, and recompense all their actions, whether good or bad. How high - Yet God is far higher than they, and from thence can easily see all things.” (WESLEY)

Job 23:13 (2) | ▶

- 13** But he *is* in one *mind*, and who can turn him? and *what* his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth. (KJV)
- “Although the expression Job uses at the beginning of v.13 is somewhat peculiar (literally, ‘but he is as one’), it is probably either an idiom for ‘unchangeable’ or an expression of divine sovereignty. Its meaning is best judged by the rest of the verse, which describes an unopposable God who does what he pleases. There are strong similarities between this verse and the language of Second Isaiah. What would be words of praise in Second Isaiah have a very different meaning in Job’s mouth, however. The decree that God will complete concerning Job is God’s inexplicable determination to destroy him.” (NIB)

Leviticus 26:1,11,12 (12) | ▶

- 1 Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up *any* image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for **I am the LORD your God.** (KJV)
- 11 **And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.** (KJV)
- 12 **And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.** (KJV)

(V1) “The first part of this a reminder of Israel’s covenant responsibility to worship and serve the LORD alone as the one true living God: they could have no idols, they had to observe Sabbath, and they had to reverence the sanctuary. The similarity of the wording to the Decalogue and the oft-repeated ‘I am the LORD your God’ was enough to remind them that this portion of Leviticus was part of the covenant made at Sinai. And here as well as with the giving of the Ten Commandments it was fitting to begin with the demand for absolute allegiance. God tolerated no rivals of any sort. The making of images and idols was not only a violation of that allegiance but also a reversal of creation, with people following gods in their own image in order to manipulate and control their own destiny.” (Ross, Allen P., *Holiness to the LORD*) (V11) The Hebrew *nephesh*, or “soul” appears four times in chapter 26, here referring to God, Himself. Other versions merely translate “I.” According to EBC, “God promised to dwell among his people in the tabernacle spiritually, not materially.” (EBC) (V12) “The blessings reach a great climax in reassuring the people that if they are faithful, all the promises included in the covenant will be fulfilled. God will *walk* with his people, as he did in the garden of Eden before the fall. What God had repeatedly promised as the goal of the covenant, ‘I shall become your God,’ will then be seen to be true....They shall become God’s people, and his dwelling shall be with them.” (NICOT)

Luke 17:20,21 (24) | ▶

- 20 **And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:** (KJV)
- 21 **Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.** (KJV)

(V20) “In Jesus’ view the kingdom of God was the spiritual rule of God in the hearts of his subjects. As such it could not be identified by the observable phenomena of material kingdoms – kings, thrones, armies, subjects, lands, etc. Its nature is such that one cannot point and say ‘Look, here it is’ or ‘Look, there it is over there.’” (Summers, Ray, *Commentary on Luke*) (V21) “Luke never views the Kingdom of God as a psychological reality. It is always God’s reigning action. The thought is related to that of Isaiah 45:14 LXX: ‘God is in you’ (i.e., present among you). In the same context Isaiah speaks of God’s salvation. Being ‘in the midst’ of them, the Kingdom is something from which they can benefit; that is, it lies now within their grasp or power.” (Danker, Frederick, *Jesus and the New Age*)

Malachi 3:6 (4) | ▶

- 6 **For I am the LORD, I change not;** therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. (KJV)

“The solemn assurance that the Lord had not changed presupposes a frame of mind which sincerely doubts the truth of this statement in connection with either God’s dispensing of his justice or the profession of his love. According to Malachi, however, there is no shadow of doubt. The perfect tense stresses this truth as a fact of history but also as significant for the present. The Lord has not changed in the past and this is also applicable in the present time.” (NICOT)

Mark 12:29,30 (G) | ▶

The Greatest Commandment

- 29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; **The Lord our God is one Lord:** (KJV)
- 30 **And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength:** this *is* the first commandment. (KJV)

(V29) “Among all the Gospel writers, only Mark recorded Jesus’ quote from Deuteronomy 6:4, which is the first part of what the Jews know as the *Shema* (referring to the opening word of the sentence in Hebrew). The *Shema* is made up from Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Deuteronomy 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41 and is the major creed of Judaism that was recited twice daily (morning and evening) by devout Jews. The teachers of the law could debate all they wanted, but Jesus brought them back to the basics by giving new life to the oft-repeated words, **The Lord our God is the one and only Lord.** What mattered

were not laws and their relative importance; what mattered was a relationship with the one true God.” (LANTC) (V30) “Jesus then answered the man’s question by explaining what those words should mean in the daily lives of the Jews. Because they believed that there was one God (as opposed to other religions, such as the Romans with their pantheon of gods), they ought to love the one true God with every part of their being: **‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength’** A person’s total being must be involved in loving God. To love God in this way is to fulfill completely all the commandments regarding one’s ‘vertical’ relationship.” (LANTC) *With all thy soul*) NTC notes: “In the NT as a whole the Greek *psuché* occurs about a 100 times.” Sometimes it is spelled *psyche*-. Random House lists the English word “*psyche* (*sí kέ*) 2. (l.c.) the human soul, spirit, or mind. 4. Neoplatonism. the second emanation of the One, regarded as a universal consciousness and as the animating principle of the world.” NTC continues: “The soul—the word used in the original has a variety of meanings—is here probably the seat of man’s emotional activity.” (NTC)

Matthew 4:17 (23) | ▶

17 From that time **Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** (KJV)

“Matthew radically edits Mark’s summary of Jesus’ preaching, omitting both ‘the time is fulfilled’ and ‘believe in the gospel’. He also omits the identification of this proclamation as ‘the gospel of God’. In place of ‘the kingdom of God,’ Matthew substitutes ‘the kingdom of heaven.’ Although Matthew occasionally retains the phrase ‘the kingdom of God’ unchanged, he normally alters it to ‘the kingdom of heaven,’ apparently out of a desire to show reverence for the divine name. Since the verb here rendered ‘is at hand’ refers normally to temporal rather than spatial proximity, we are justified in seeing in ‘the kingdom of heaven’ a reference to the full establishment of God’s rule. That is, in most occurrences of the phrase, ‘the kingdom of heaven’ refers not to the space where God rules, ‘God’s territory’, but to the activity of ruling itself. Jesus, repeating the warning uttered by John the Baptist, announces that God is about to establish his rule among those who have treated his sovereignty with disdain.” (IBC)

Matthew 6:14 (18) | ▶

14 For if **ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:** (KJV)

“Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:14-15 explain His statement about forgiveness in Matthew 6:12. Though God’s forgiveness of sin is not based on one’s forgiving others, a Christian’s forgiveness *is* based on realizing he has been forgiven. Personal fellowship with God is in view in these verses (not salvation from sin). One cannot walk in fellowship with God if he refuses to **forgive** others.” (BKC)

Matthew 9:35,36 (19) | ▶

35 And **Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.** (KJV)

36 **But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.** (KJV)

(V35) “This passage is part of the framework surrounding the presentation of Jesus as the Messiah in word and deed. At the same time the verse lays the groundwork for their mission, since what is given to the disciples – authority (10:1) – corresponds precisely to the final words, which describe Jesus’ own authority and his power to heal.” (SCHWEIZER) (V36) “Matthew amplifies the comment: they are ‘like sheep without a shepherd, confused and exhausted’. To see the people in this state fills Jesus with pity and love. The words translated in the REB ‘*harassed and helpless*’ have a subtle link with the descriptions earlier of those ‘struck down’ by illness, ‘prostrate’ and ‘paralyzed’. He meets their needs with healing, but also with the encouragement of the good news of the kingdom. Perhaps there is an implied criticism in this additional comment. The leadership had failed the people, leaving them vulnerable and helpless.” (EPW)

Matthew 12:10-18 (20) | ▶

10 **And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.** (KJV)

11 **And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?** (KJV)

12 **How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.** (KJV)

- 13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. (KJV)
- 14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. (KJV)
- 15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; (KJV)
- 16 And charged them that they should not make him known: (KJV)
- 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, (KJV)
- 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. (KJV)

(V10) "A hand withered and shriveled is beyond human help. Mark and Luke say only that the Pharisees watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal, that they might accuse him....From Matthew we learn that these thoughts were not left silent. Jesus knowing them compelled the Pharisees to speak out...All they say they want to know is whether it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath....We see how little impression Christ's word on mercy has made on them." (LENSKI) (V11) "One does not imply that the man in question possessed only one sheep, and that he would therefore be particularly anxious to rescue it. The Greek *hen* is often used in New Testament Greek as if it were an indefinite pronoun, and the implication here is that, even if one out of a large flock of sheep had fallen into a ditch, its owner would pull it out." (TNTC) (V12) "The Law as interpreted by rabbis permitted doing something to help an animal help itself... But whatever the law says, instinctively the farmer rushes to help his stricken animal. If they pity a sheep, **how much more** should they show mercy to a human being. **So it is lawful**, not offensive to God, but pleasing not to do just any kind of work but **to do good on the Sabbath.**" (ACNT) (V13) *Whole* "Whole, healthy, sound, well. Even from their own point of view the Pharisees must have found it difficult to call this breaking the Sabbath, for Jesus used no remedy, performed no action, simply spoke a word, and the man merely stretched forth his hand." (Broadus, John A, *Commentary on Matthew*) (V14) "This is the culminating point in the opposition of the Jewish religious authorities. This final breach with the Pharisees and its consequences seem to be located rather early in the ministry. If the reference is not to an early plot on Jesus' life, we must regard the verse as bringing forward in time the opposition which was evoked later by Jesus' persistence in the attitudes revealed in this passage. Mark says that the Pharisees acted with the Herodians; but for Matthew the Pharisees seem to represent the only real opposition to Jesus." (NCB) (V15) "The withdrawal is not to passivity, but to the work of healing—still on the sabbath. Instead of retaliating, Jesus heals. He is the one who gives the ultimate 'rest', salvation in the kingdom of God. [Jesus] declares that mercy, not ritual, is what God wants from us and whose whole life is represented by acts of loving response to human need." (NIB) (V16) "Jesus was not seeking fame. He did not wish to stand out as a worker of miracles. Vain display, earthly glory, matters such as these did not constitute the reason for his incarnation and sojourn among men. They were completely out of harmony with the humble "Servant of Jehovah" of Isaiah's prophecies." (NTC) "Rather than contending with the Pharisees further, Jesus *withdrew* and warned those who were beginning to recognize his power not to tell others about it. Jesus would not risk extinguishing a wick on the verge of going out, and so far would he go in not breaking a reed that he would offer his cheek to those smiting him with one. Thus Jesus demonstrated that he preferred not to fight others when it was not necessary. His opponents thought him a youthful upstart, but Jesus knew his identity and his destiny. When we recognize our identity and destiny as his followers, we may also be less concerned with what the misinformed think of us." (IVP) (V17) **PRONUNCIATION:** "Esaias (i-zay'yuhs)," Greek for Isaiah. (HCBP) "Matthew gets to the focus of this chapter—Jesus as the one who **fulfilled prophecy**. The people expected the Messiah to be a king. This quotation from Isaiah 42:1-4 showed that the Messiah was indeed a king, but it illustrated the kind of king he would be—a quiet, gentle ruler who brings justice to the nations." (LANTC) (V18) "*My servant* - That is, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus; called a servant from his taking the "form" of a "servant," or his being born in a humble condition and from his obeying or "serving" God. *Shall show judgment to the Gentiles* - The word "judgment" means, in the Hebrew, law, "commands, etc.," It means the "whole system of truth;" the law of God in general; the purpose, plan, or "judgment" of God about human duty and conduct. Here it means, evidently, the system of "gospel truth," the Christian scheme. *Gentiles* - All who were not Jews. This prophecy (Isaiah 42:1-4) was fulfilled by the multitudes coming to him from Idumea and beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon, as recorded by Mark 3:7-8." (BARNES)

Psalm 63:1,2,5 (7) | ▶

- 1 **O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; (KJV)**
- 2 **To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary. (KJV)**
- 5 **My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips: (KJV)**

(V1) Maclaren quickly moves to the figurative meanings, for which he is so respected: "Every soul is athirst for God; but unless a man can say, 'thou art my God,' he knows not where to slake his thirst, and seeks, not after the living Fountain of Waters, but after muddy pools and broken cisterns." (Maclaren) (V2) "The psalm is a prayer for help in the first person style. It is composed as the prayer of a person who comes to the sanctuary from a dangerous world where there are people who seek his life. In that dangerous world the psalmist has experienced the absence of God as the thirst and hunger of soul, a need for the presence of God without which his soul cannot live. The need has been met by encounter with the Presence." (IBC) (V5) Davidson entitles the whole psalm, "Spiritual Food for Every Need." "'My soul thirsts for you' (verse 1) now becomes 'my soul is satisfied' (verse 5), satisfied 'as with a rich feast.' This is his description of that communion with God which dominates and gives meaning to life." (Davidson, Robert, *The Vitality of Worship*) *My mouth shall praise thee*) "David was so abundantly satisfied with the love of God that he wanted everyone else to know about God's love too. The point is that it is both natural and right to share good news. King David knew this, and his song of unmixed praise of the God who satisfies our deepest longings is the result." (BOICE)

Psalm 77:11,13 (8) | ▶

- 11 **I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. (KJV)**
- 13 **Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary: who *is* so great a God as *our* God? (KJV)**

(V11) "The psalmist's comfort and hope came from his musing on God's great deliverance of Israel at the Exodus. Asaph decided to recall (**remember... meditate... consider**, God's **miracles** performed in the past by His **right hand**. Asaph based his **appeal** on those **works** and **deeds**." (BKC) "In a time of great affliction, when ready to despair, the psalmist derives relief from calling to mind God's former and wonderful works of delivering power and grace." (NC) (V13) *In the sanctuary*) Elsewhere the KJV translates the Hebrew noun *qodesh*, "holiness," as EXS does here. i.e., "in holiness." "God always acts in strict accordance with His holiness. It is not that God has forgotten his lovingkindness; it is simply that it His love and His holiness always work in complete harmony. This is what explains so many of life's mysterious disciplines — both individual and national." (EXS)

Psalm 86:2,3,9,10,12 (R) | ▶

A prayer of protection

- 2 **Preserve my soul; for I *am* holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. (KJV)**
- 3 **Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. (KJV)**
- 9 **All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. (KJV)**
- 10 **For thou *art* great, and doest wondrous things: thou *art* God alone. (KJV)**
- 12 **I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. (KJV)**

(V2) "the phrase **I am holy** does not speak of the transcendence of God, as in Isaiah 6:3. Rather it speaks of the faithfulness and godliness of a righteous person who, by God's grace, is living in accordance with God's law. It is another way that David describes himself as a **servant** of the Lord." (NNIBC) (V3) "Characteristic of David, [Psalm 86] is an appeal for mercy based on the character of God. The psalm is filled with petitions...When David refers to himself as God's servant he is already developing his most important theme and is speaking consistently with it. It is only because God has been merciful to him that he has a relationship to God, and it is only because God has shown himself to be merciful that David can make this appeal." (BOICE) (V9) *All nations*) "Since God had made all nations (Acts 17:26), it was safe to conclude that they would all one day worship him. The prophecy, however, still remains unfulfilled. **And shall glorify thy Name**. Either with their lips, or in their lives, or in both ways." (PUL) (V10) "The psalmist affirms his confidence in his God by proclaiming his great acts, by affirming his wholehearted commitment to the God who 'alone' can do these wonders, and by expressing his belief that all people will one day submit themselves to the Lord....What an expression of confidence in

the Lord's universal sovereignty and in his saving plan for the nations! Yahweh alone is God, and the gods of the nations are worthless." (EBC) (V12) "The certainty expressed in these closing words...paves the way for the celebration of the awesome uniqueness and power of God. Celebration also leads to a vow of thanksgiving that expresses itself in the psalmist honoring God with all his heart or will. Such thanksgiving springs from the psalmist's experience of the steadfast love of God." (Davidson, Robert, *The Vitality of Worship*)

Psalm 86:4,5 (13) | ▶

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. (KJV)

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. (KJV)

(V4) *Rejoice the soul*) This verse comes from Psalm 25:1. "The first clause is not a mere periphrasis for 'make me glad,' or 'cause me to rejoice.' It means 'make me heartily rejoice, because I am thy servant....To raise the soul to God is to regard him with affection and strong confidence. At the same time, there is an allusion to the strict sense of the Hebrew verb, as if he had said, 'make my soul rejoice, since I bring it up or raise it to thee for this very purpose.'" (Alexander, Joseph A., *The Psalms Translated and Explained*) (V5) "The psalmist confides in the Lord, because he knows the nature of his God. The Lord has promised to extend his benefits to all who call on him: his goodness, forgiveness, and love" ("mercy"). (EBC)

Psalm 119:33,45,167 (6) | ▶

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. (KJV)

45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. (KJV)

167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. (KJV)

(V33) "This stanza is about that *Way* the poet has now mentioned more than once. The NEB translates: 'Teach me, O Lord, the way set out in thy statutes, and in keeping them I shall find my reward.' This is because the Way is alive, it is the living Way, for God is the Living God, and it is his living Way that is taught to man in the *Torah*." (DSB) (V45) "In thy service is perfect freedom,' as the ancient prayer declares. 'Liberation' always means two things and not one. It means being set free *from*, and being set free *to*." (DSB) (V167) *My soul hath kept thy testimonies*) "David's conscience here witnesses for him. He loved God's testimonies. He kept them, his soul kept them. The soul must be sanctified and renewed, and delivered into the mould of the word; the soul must be employed in glorifying God." (MAHAN)

Psalm 143:6,8,12 (R) | ▶

6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah. (KJV)

8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. (KJV)

12 And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant. (KJV)

(V6) *spread out my hands*) "This was one of the traditional postures for prayer in biblical times." (NNIBC) David "prayed eagerly for the Lord to meet the needs of his hungry, thirsty heart. The image of **parched land** portrays his soul's great spiritual need at that moment, that God would come to his rescue." (BKC) (V8) "In this verse he again prays that God would show him his favor visibly and effectually. The expression *cause me to hear*, may seem not very proper, as the goodness of God is rather felt than heard; but as the mere perception of God's benefits, without a believing apprehension and improvement of them, would do us little good, David very properly begins with hearing....*In the morning* means the same with speedily or seasonably...His prayer that a way might be opened up for him to walk in, refers to the anxieties which perplexed him. He intimates that he was dismayed, and brought to a stand, unable to move a step if God did not open a way, by his divine power...." (CALVIN) (V12) "In calling himself *The servant of God*, he by no means boasts of his services, but rather commends the grace of God, to whom he owed this privilege....This is equivalent to making himself God's client, and committing his life to his protection." (CALVIN) "To be a servant of the Lord is a position to which even kings might aspire. Since there is no greater Lord, there is no greater position than to be aligned with His purposes." (NNIBC)

Psalm 150:1-3,6 (R) | ▶

1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. (KJV)

- 2 **Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. (KJV)**
3 **Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. (KJV)**
6 **Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD. (KJV)**

(V1) "This final psalm not only concludes the special group of praising psalms, but appears also to represent a doxology to the fifth book and indeed to the whole Psalter. It is an extended call to praise which combines exuberant, sincere rhetoric with the realities of temple worship. It grapples with a recurring problem of worshiping hearts, to which the Psalter so often bears witness, the problem of how to render to God adequate praise. A fervent call is issued to powers above to engage in worship. The very call gives an enhanced sense of Yahweh's awesome majesty as God of the heavenly sanctuary." (WBC) (V2) "**Praise him for his mighty deeds**, which are manifest in the creation of the world. **According to his exceeding greatness**: Lit., 'the abundance of his greatness.' The measure of his praise is to accord with the measure of his greatness. However, a better reading, favored by the parallelism, is 'for his exceeding greatness.' These words following the reference to the **mighty firmament**, give an impression of immensity and unique power and are characteristically Hebrew." (IB) (V3) "What the psalmist urges is the appropriateness of music especially instrumental music. He mentions in particular the **trumpet**, the **lute**, the **harp**, the **timbrel strings and pipe**, and **cymbals**, apparently thinking of them as they played their part in the great festivals of the temple....The musical instruments fall into three categories: (a) trumpets, possibly blown by priests; (b) those of the Levitical musicians, i.e., lutes and harps; (c) those used by the laity, men and women who joined in the loud tribute of praise. We can imagine that each group, as it was mentioned took up its part, and so the volume of sound swelled in a great crescendo." (IB) (V6) "As Mays puts it: 'No other use of breath could be more right and true to life than praise of the LORD. No other sound could better speak the gratitude of life than praise of the LORD'. The final verse of the Psalter is an eloquent reminder of the book's pervasive message: To praise God is to live, and to live is to praise God." (NIB)

1 Timothy 1:17 (5) | ▶

- 17 **Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.**
Amen. (KJV)

ACCS quotes "Augustine (354-430): 'This is also a rule for our salvation: to "believe in God the Father almighty," creator of all things, king of the ages, immortal and invisible. He is indeed the almighty God who made all things. He is before the ages and made and governs the ages. He doesn't after all, grow with them, or stretch out in space, nor is he shut in or bounded by anything material. He abides with and in himself as full and perfect eternity, which neither human thought can comprehend nor tongue describe.' SERMONS 215.2." (ACCS)