

THE  
UNFOLDING  
MYSTERY  
OF THE  
DIVINE NAME

*THE GOD OF SINAI IN OUR MIDST*

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STUDY GUIDE

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*Design: Beth Hagenberg*

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# INTRODUCTION

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE STUDY GUIDE



The following reflections and devotional exercises accompany the material in each chapter of *The Unfolding Mystery of the Divine Name: The God of Sinai in Our Midst* (IVP Academic, 2012).<sup>1</sup> They include suggestions for individual or corporate prayer, questions for group discussion, guidelines for meditation, thought-provoking quotations from saints and mystics of generations past, and practical proposals for imitating the ways of God. The purpose of these exercises is to help you implement and integrate your understanding of God's character within the life of Christian faith. Feel free to adapt or add to these suggestions in light of what you are presently learning about the ways of God. Above all, try to remember as you read and think and learn that you are already in the presence of the God about whom this study speaks; make your deliberations into a conversation with God, a journey toward God, even a dance in which you learn new steps by following as God leads.

### READING ON YOUR OWN

As you read each chapter, make a list of questions that the text raises or of insights that you find especially encouraging. You might find it helpful to set one or two goals for yourself—for example, understanding some aspect of God's character more deeply, integrating that insight more fully into your daily life or ministry, perhaps endeavoring to act out a more conscious imitation of the ways of God.

Let your own goals and questions guide your use of this material. If a particular exercise or illustration does not seem applicable at present, you can always come back to it later. Because each one of us learns in different ways, try to be aware of your own preferences. Some of us learn by doing, others by thinking things through, still others will gain the most from quiet prayer and contemplation, and so on. Try to balance ways of learning that come naturally to you with other approaches that seem more difficult or risky.

One way of integrating the results of your study is to organize them under headings such as the following (which identify past, present, and future aspects of pilgrimage):

- ways of God that I know already;
- ways of God that I am learning anew or in greater depth;
- ways of God that I have yet to explore.

Along the same lines, you might want to consider the implications of God's character not only for you as an individual, but also for the life of your family, for the congregation or community of which you are a part, and then finally for humanity and for creation as a whole.

Another possibility is to distinguish between different spheres of application: Christian character in relation to Christian conduct; the internal life of the church as distinct from its ministry and mission in the world; approaches suited to non-Christians, new converts, growing disciples, candidates for ministry, mature believers, and so forth.

## **READING IN THE COMPANY OF OTHERS**

In addition to all the usual questions about who will lead your sessions, how often or long you plan to meet, and (especially!) who is responsible for refreshments, here are three basic dynamics to keep in mind. Be aware of each individual in your group and his or her personal goals and circumstances. Each person will have a different response to the suggestions outlined in the study guide. Second, give some thought to the life of the group as a whole (for example, ensuring that everyone contributes equally to the conversation). And, third, it will take a certain amount of effort to stay "on track" with the learning goals that you have

set yourselves. In particular, try to think of ways in which each of you can improve the learning experience for other members of your group.

If you are the leader, you will likely want to read through a given chapter or section of the text, then decide which study materials are most relevant to your group or session. Some members will not have prepared as thoroughly, so they will appreciate it if you can review the content of the chapter at the beginning of your time together. Again, given that everyone learns in different ways, try to select a range of different exercises and activities. Don't hesitate to adapt the material or to formulate new proposals of your own. You may need to print out additional resources for use in your session or come up with new initiatives that can be attempted between your next meeting and the one that follows.

As you consider the various quotations and study questions, remember that it is not all up to you. Let both the book and the study guide remind you of what *God* is doing, even as you read and debate and buckle down to the hard work of discipleship. Whatever ideas, devotions, changes of character, or acts of ministry may be entertained here, they are no more than *responses* to who God is and how God acts in our midst. Allow God to form you in all the ways of which you are now learning.

# NAMES AND THE NAMING OF GOD



## IN GOD'S IMAGE

*Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

**GENESIS 1:26-27**

*Sometimes I consider myself as a Stone before the Carver, when he is to make a Statue of it: And presenting myself thus before GOD, I beg of Him to form His perfect Image in my Soul, and to make me altogether like Himself.*

**BROTHER LAWRENCE OF THE RESURRECTION**  
[CA. 1614-1691], "FIFTH LETTER" [UNDATED]<sup>2</sup>

### *Reflection and Discussion*

What does it mean to say that all human beings are created "in the image of God"? Could this refer to

- our ability to exercise "dominion" over creation (Genesis 1:26)?
- the identity of Jesus (John 14:8-9)?
- the nature of salvation (2 Corinthians 3:18)?
- bodily existence, physical form, and the sanctity of life?
- reason, intellect, and will?

- moral virtue?
- the human need to form relationships?<sup>3</sup>

If one or more of these reflects the “image” of God in humanity, what might it mean to “be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Ephesians 5:1)? In particular, what kinds of activity reflect the image of God in us, and what forms of behavior contradict, deny, or obscure it?

Our Lord commanded us to be merciful, that we might have likeness to our Father in heaven, because the merciful draw near to God. (St. Isaac of Syria [died ca. 700 CE])<sup>4</sup>



### “THAT I MIGHT KNOW YOU”

*It is related that Jesus said, “Scholars are of three kinds: he who knows God and his commandments, he who knows God but not His commandments, and he who knows God’s commandments but does not know God.”*

**AL-HAKIM AL-TIRMIDHI [DIED 898 CE]**<sup>5</sup>

*Let us make it our Business thoroughly to know God. The more one knows Him, the more he desires to know Him. And as Love is generally the Measure of Knowledge, the deeper and more extensive our Knowledge is; so much the greater will our Love be: And if our love to God were great, we should equally love Him in Troubles and Consolations.*

**BROTHER LAWRENCE OF THE RESURRECTION [CA. 1614-1691],**  
**“SIXTEENTH LETTER” [FEBRUARY 6, 1691]**<sup>6</sup>

In cooperation with one or more trusted friends, agree for a set period of time to pray for one another:

- that you would each know God more fully;
- that God would grant you, together, to reflect the divine nature more fully in your daily life and conduct.

At the conclusion of the agreed time period, meet to discuss what you are learning about God and yourselves, and to repeat the same prayers for one another in person.



## “HALLOWED BE THY NAME”

*Lord, I have called You and longed for You. I am ready to renounce everything for Your sake, who first moved me to seek You. Blessed be Your Name, O Lord, for Your goodness to Your servant, according to the richness of Your mercies.*

THOMAS À KEMPIS [CA. 1380-1471], *THE IMITATION OF CHRIST* [1418], 3.217

### *Reflection and Discussion*

- What does it mean to “hallow,” “honor,” or “sanctify” the name of God (as in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, “Father, . . . hallowed be your name”)?
- What does it mean to pray “in the name of Jesus”? In other words, what makes prayer “in the name of Jesus,” or in the name of Israel’s God, different from any other prayer?
- In addition to Scripture and the traditions of the church, what event or experience has taught you most about the character and “name” of God?

### *Prayer*

Make a list of one or more of the following:

- Jesus’ character traits and characteristic ways of dealing with people
- The accomplishments of Jesus
- The names, titles, and descriptions of Jesus found in Scripture (or elsewhere in Christian tradition)

As you pray, call on each element that you have listed as the basis for your own petitions. Formulate a series of individual prayers, each based on a particular aspect of his identity.

Almightie GOD, unto whom all hartes bee open, and all desires knowen, and from Whom no secretes are hid: clense the thoughtes of our hartes, by the inspiracion of thy holy spirite: that we may perfectly love thee, *and worthely magnifie thy holy name*: Through Christ our Lorde. Amen. (The First English Prayer Book of Edward VI [1549])<sup>8</sup>



## THE NAMES GOD GIVES

From about the fourth century onward, it has been traditional for converts to take a “Christian” name at baptism. In our own day, entry into a monastic community is often marked by the adoption of a religious name, to accompany vows of perpetual service to God. Both practices are, ultimately, expressions of the fact that knowing and serving God transforms our human identity. Even more ancient is the tradition of naming children according to what the parents have learned, or experienced, of God’s character and work. Evidence of this practice is found throughout the Hebrew Bible, in the many personal names that incorporate an explicit reference to God.

Choose a name (or names) that best expresses what you have discovered about God or what God has done for you. Think of it as an adopted name, and meditate on how God has acted in your life, ways in which God has changed your identity, or ways in which you look for God to work in the future. To explore names from Scripture, or to discover more about some of the people to whom these names originally belonged, you may find it helpful to consult a concordance or other biblical reference work.



## THE “NINETY-NINE BEAUTIFUL NAMES” OR “ATTRIBUTES OF PERFECTION”

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Allāh, God                   | 14. Al-Muṣawwir, the Giver of Form |
| 2. Al-Raḥmān, the Compassionate | 15. Al-Ghaffār, the Forgiver       |
| 3. Al-Raḥīm, the Merciful       | 16. Al-Qaḥḥār, the Subduer         |
| 4. Al-Malik, the King           | 17. Al-Waḥḥāb, the Bestower        |
| 5. Al-Quddūs, the Holy          | 18. Al-Razzāq, the Provider        |
| 6. Al-Salām, the Flawless       | 19. Al-Fattāḥ, the Opener          |
| 7. Al-Mu’min, the Faithful      | 20. Al-‘Alīm, the All-Knowing      |
| 8. Al-Muḥaymin, the Guardian    | 21. Al-Qābiḍ, the Constrictor      |
| 9. Al-‘Azīz, the Mighty         | 22. Al-Bāsīt, the Expander         |
| 10. Al-Jabbār, the Irresistible | 23. Al-Khāfiḍ, the Abaser          |
| 11. Al-Mutakabbir, the Superb   | 24. Al-Rāfi‘, the Exalter          |
| 12. Al-Khālīq, the Creator      | 25. Al-Mu‘izz, the Honorer         |
| 13. Al-Bārī’, the Maker         |                                    |

26. Al-Mudhill, the One Who Humbles
27. Al-Samī<sup>‘</sup>, the All-Hearing
28. Al-Baṣīr, the All-Seeing
29. Al-Haḳam, the Arbitrator
30. Al-‘Adl, the Just
31. Al-Laṭīf, the Benevolent
32. Al-Khabīr, the Aware
33. Al-Ḥalīm, the Forbearing
34. Al-‘Azīm, the Tremendous
35. Al-Ghaḑūr, the All-Forgiving
36. Al-Shakūr, the Appreciative
37. Al-‘Alī, the Most High
38. Al-Kabīr, the Most Great
39. Al-Ḥafīz, the Preserver
40. Al-Muqīt, the Nourisher
41. Al-Ḥasīb, the Reckoner
42. Al-Jalīl, the Majestic
43. Al-Karīm, the Generous
44. Al-Raqīb, the Watchful
45. Al-Mujīb, the Answerer
46. Al-Wāsi<sup>‘</sup>, the All-Embracing
47. Al-Ḥakīm, the Wise
48. Al-Wadūd, the Loving-Kind
49. Al-Majīd, the Glorious
50. Al-Bā‘ith, the Raiser of the Dead
51. Al-Shahīd, the Witness
52. Al-Ḥaqq, the Truth
53. Al-Wakīl, the Dependable
54. Al-Qawī, the Strong
55. Al-Matīn, the Steadfast
56. Al-Walī, the Patron
57. Al-Ḥamīd, the Praiseworthy
58. Al-Muḥṣī, the Reckoner
59. Al-Mubdi<sup>’</sup>, the Initiator
60. Al-Mu‘īd, the Restorer
61. Al-Muḥyi, the Giver of Life
62. Al-Mumit, the Bringer of Death
63. Al-Ḥayy, the Ever-Living
64. Al-Qayyūm, the Self-Sustaining
65. Al-Wājīd, the Finder
66. Al-Mājid, the Magnificent
67. Al-Wāḥid, the Unique
68. Al-Ṣamad, the Eternal
69. Al-Qādir, the All-Powerful
70. Al-Muqtadir, the Giver of Power
71. Al-Muqaddim, the Expediter
72. Al-Mu’akhhir, the Delayer
73. Al-Awwal, the First
74. Al-Ākhir, the Last
75. Al-Zāhir, the Manifest
76. Al-Bāṭin, the Hidden
77. Al-Wālī, the Governor
78. Al-Muta‘ālī, the Transcendent
79. Al-Barr, the Source of All Goodness
80. Al-Tawwāb, the Acceptor of Repentance
81. Al-Muntaqim, the Avenger
82. Al-‘Afū, the Pardoner
83. Al-Ra’ūf, the All-Pitying
84. Mālik al-Mulk, the King of the Kingdom
85. Dhū<sup>’</sup>-Jalāl wa ‘l-Ikrām, Majesty and Generosity
86. Al-Muqsit, the Equitable
87. Al-Jāmi<sup>‘</sup>, the Gatherer
88. Al-Ghanī, the Self-Sufficient
89. Al-Mughnī, the Enricher
90. Al-Mānī<sup>‘</sup>, the Defender
91. Al-Ḍārr, the Punisher
92. Al-Nāfi<sup>‘</sup>, the Propitious
93. Al-Nūr, the Light
94. Al-Hādī, the Guide
95. Al-Badī<sup>‘</sup>, the Incomparable
96. Al-Bāqī, the Everlasting
97. Al-Wārith, the Inheritor
98. Al-Rashīd, the Infallible Teacher
99. Al-Ṣabūr, the Patient

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# A GOD COMPASSIONATE AND GRACIOUS



*In the Name of God, the Infinitely Compassionate, Most Merciful.*

*All Praise is God's, the Sustainer of all worlds,  
the Infinitely Compassionate and Most Merciful,  
Sovereign of the Day of Reckoning.*

*You alone do we worship, and You alone do we ask for help.*

*Guide us on the straight path; the path of those who have received Your favor,  
not the path of those who have earned Your wrath.*

**QUR'AN, AL-FĀTIḤAH [SEVENTH CENTURY CE]<sup>9</sup>**

*The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: . . . I AM that I AM; and  
He said: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: I AM hath sent me unto  
you [Exodus 3:14]. You find I am written three times, and this means that the  
Holy One, blessed be He, said: I created My world with compassion, I will guide  
it with compassion, and I will return to Jerusalem with compassion.*

**MIDRASH ON PSALMS 72 §1  
[THIRD CENTURY CE OR LATER]<sup>10</sup>**

*The Lord is merciful and compassionate, patient and plenteous in mercy.  
A person can be merciful and compassionate in isolated cases, but none except  
the Lord can be found to be merciful and compassionate by nature.*

*Here merciful is put first, so that you can applaud the  
compassionate Lord not momentarily but continually.*

**CASSIODORUS [CA. 487-585 CE],  
EXPOSITIO PSALMORUM, ON PSALM 103:8<sup>11</sup>**

## THE LORD WAITS

*Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show compassion to you.*

ISAIAH 30:18

In praying to God, it is customary for us to adopt the attitude of a petitioner or supplicant, one who must ask (perhaps even plead and beg) in order for the request to be granted. As an alternative to this approach, begin instead with the assumption that, far from needing to be prodded or cajoled into action, God is already willing to show mercy and compassion in answer to our need, but simply awaits our prayerful response to this offer of assistance. Think of your prayer not as a plea for God to be merciful but rather as a gesture of permission on your part that allows an already merciful God access to your needs. By means of your prayer, create a “space” for God to work; intercede by bringing together the gracious will of a compassionate God and the deep need of a particular situation that concerns you.

Moses said: “My Lord, forgive me and my brother. Allow us to enter into your mercy. You are the most Merciful of those who are merciful.” (*Qur’an*, Sura 7:151 [seventh century CE])

Like a handful of dust thrown into the sea are the sins of all flesh when compared with the mercy and providence of God. Just as a strongly flowing fountain is not blocked up by a handful of earth, so the compassion of the Creator is not overcome by the wickedness of his creatures. (St. Isaac of Syria [died ca. 700 CE])<sup>12</sup>



## “TO YOU, O LORD, I LIFT UP MY SOUL”

*The all-merciful and beneficent Father has compassion on those that fear Him; to approach Him in sincerity of heart is to be repaid with His kind and gracious favors.*

1 CLEMENT 23:1 [CA. 96 CE]<sup>13</sup>

***Meditation***

Read Psalm 25 slowly, one phrase at a time, comparing your experience of God with that of the psalmist. Meditate in particular on God's response to those who put their trust in him. As you read, allow the text to speak to you of God's mercy and forbearance in relation to your own situation.

***Reading Scripture Together***

Divide your study group into two sections, then read Psalm 103 to each other by half verses. Have each member identify a verse, thought, or theme that he or she finds especially relevant in expressing the compassion and mercy of God.

You are all-good, for your mercies fail not,  
 You are merciful, for your loving-kindnesses never cease,  
 for we have always hoped in you.

*(Shemoneh Esreh 18 [first to second centuries CE])*<sup>14</sup>



**“HIS FATHER SAW HIM AND WAS  
 FILLED WITH COMPASSION”**

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

**2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4**

***Meditation***

- In what ways have you already experienced the compassion of the One whom Jesus called “Father”?
- In what ways do you require and desire a deeper experience of that compassion?

***Reaching Out***

Be compassionate, as your Father is compassionate. (Luke 6:36)

- In what ways do people whom you know need to experience God’s compassion?
- In what ways are you able to show them the same compassion that God has shown to you?

For this is what it is to be human—to be merciful. Or rather, this is what it is to be God—to have mercy. (John Chrysostom [ca. 347-407 CE], *Homily 4*, on Philippians 1:22-26)<sup>15</sup>

Do you wish to commune with God in your mind? Strive to be merciful. To the spiritual love which imprints the invisible image of God in oneself, there is no other path than that [one] should first of all begin to be merciful in the measure that our heavenly Father is merciful, as the Lord said (Luke 6:36)... Ever let mercy outweigh all else in you. Let our compassion be a mirror where we may see in ourselves that likeness and that true image which belong to the Divine nature and Divine essence. (St. Isaac of Syria [died ca. 700 CE])<sup>16</sup>



## CAN THE SINLESS SYMPATHIZE WITH SIN?

In the *Testament of Abraham*, an apocryphal Jewish work likely written in Egypt around 100 CE, God sends the archangel Michael to prepare the aged patriarch Abraham for death. Abraham stalls for time, asking to be given a guided tour of creation—both the inhabited earth and the place of final judgment. Being sinless, Abraham has no patience with sinners, whereas God, the creator of all, proves more merciful. In the following episode this difference of perspective leads God to cut short the patriarch’s tour of earth.

After Abraham saw the place of judgment, the cloud took him down to the firmament below. And when Abraham looked down upon the earth, he saw a man committing adultery with a married woman. And Abraham turned and said to Michael, “Do you see this sin? But, lord, send fire from heaven, that it may consume them.” And immediately fire came down from heaven and consumed them. . . .

And again Abraham looked up and saw other men slandering their fellows, and he said, “Let the earth open and swallow them up.” And

while he was speaking, the earth swallowed them up alive.

And again the cloud brought him to another place. And Abraham saw some people leaving for a desert place to commit murder. And he said to Michael, “Do you see this sin? But let wild beasts come out of the desert and rend them in two.” And in that very hour wild beasts came out of the desert and devoured them.

Then the Lord God spoke to Michael, saying, “Turn away Abraham to his house, and do not let him go round all the creation which I made, because his heart is not moved for sinners, but my heart is moved for sinners, so that they may convert and live and repent of their sins and be saved.” (*Testament of Abraham* 12:1-4, 6-13 [Recension B])<sup>17</sup>

### ***Reflection and Discussion***

- How, generally speaking, do you typically react (or how does your church react) to the sins of nonbelievers? Of church members?
- In light of this story, what difference does it make to say that Jesus is able “to empathize with our weaknesses,” having been “tempted in every way, just as we are” (Hebrews 4:15)?

Do thou therefore as a compassionate shepherd, full of love and mercy and careful of his flock, visit and count thy flock, and seek that which is gone astray. (*Didascalia Apostolorum* 2:20 [early third century CE])<sup>18</sup>

One is loving-kind among God’s servants who desires for God’s creatures whatever he desires for himself; and whoever prefers them to himself is even higher than that. (Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazālī [1058-1111], *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*)<sup>19</sup>



### **“BE HOLY”**

*You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.*

LEVITICUS 19:2

### ***Reflection and Discussion***

- Who is the holiest person you have ever met, seen, or heard of?

- What made this person especially holy?
- As far as you know, what was this person's opinion of his or her own holiness?

### *Reaching Out*

- Decide on three actions or accomplishments that you, your friends, or your community could intentionally undertake as reflections or expressions of God's holiness.
- Decide on three actions or accomplishments that you, your friends, or your community could intentionally refrain from as reflections or expressions of God's holiness.

### *Prayer*

O Lord my God, rescue me from myself, and give me to thee; take away from me everything which draws me from thee; give me all those things which led me to thee; for Jesus Christ's sake. (*Piae Precationes* [1564])

Cleanse me, O God, by the bright fountain of thy mercy, and water me with the dew of thine abundant grace, that being purified from my sins, I may grow up in good works, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. (*A Collection of Private Devotions* [1627])<sup>20</sup>



## PRAYER FOR THE NATIONS

The ancient Israelites are not the only people to have turned to God in time of crisis. More than eight months prior to Abraham Lincoln's famous Emancipation Proclamation (issued January 1, 1863), the U.S. Congress passed the District of Columbia Emancipation Act, intended to free all slaves in Washington. When African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Daniel Payne failed to receive assurance that Lincoln would sign the bill into law, he called for Washington churches to consecrate Sunday, April 6, 1862, as a day of petition and thanksgiving.<sup>21</sup> Lincoln signed the bill on April 16. A year later, with the advance of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army into Pennsylvania causing wide-

spread panic in Washington, Lincoln himself proclaimed “a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer” for Thursday, April 30, 1863. Despite enormous losses on both sides, the Battle of Gettysburg in early July became the turning point of the American Civil War. Seventy-five years later, in a different war, with French and British forces trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk, King George VI of England called for Sunday, May 26, 1940, to be a national day of prayer. Over the next week and a half more than three hundred thousand soldiers were rescued in what has been called “the miracle of Dunkirk.”

Along the same lines, pray for the spiritual, moral, physical, and social needs of your nation, on the assumption that God’s will is that justice, mercy, and compassion prevail for all of your fellow citizens.

We give thanks to you for all things, Master, almighty, because you have not taken your mercies and compassion from us, but in each and every generation you save, rescue, help, and protect. (*Apostolic Constitutions* 7.38.1 [fourth century CE])<sup>22</sup>



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- Henri J. M. Nouwen. *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Moses Maimonides. *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Translated by Shlomo Pines. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963. (Several editions of this work are available, some of which offer a more easily accessible abridgement of the original.)

## A GOD SLOW TO ANGER



*There were ten generations from Adam to Noah, to show how great was [God's] longsuffering, for all the generations provoked him continually until he brought upon them the waters of the Flood. There were ten generations from Noah to Abraham, to show how great was his longsuffering, for all the generations provoked him continually until Abraham our father came and received the reward of them all.*

MISHNAH PIRQE ABOT 5:2<sup>23</sup>

*Truly, He is forbearing, always ready to forgive!*

QUR'AN, SURA 17:44 [SEVENTH CENTURY CE]<sup>24</sup>

*Al-Halim [the Forbearing] is one who observes the disobedience of the rebellious and notices the opposition to the command, yet anger does not incite him nor wrath seize him, nor do haste and recklessness move him to rush to take vengeance, although he is utterly capable of doing that. As the Most High said: "If God should take men to task for their wrongdoing, He would not leave on the earth one creature that crawls."*

ABU HAMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ [1058-1111],  
THE NINETY-NINE BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF GOD<sup>25</sup>

### LOVE AND FEAR

*These are the last times. Let us then exercise restraint, let us fear God's patience, that it may not turn to condemnation for us. For either let us fear the coming wrath, or*

*let us love the present grace—one or the other—only that we be found in Christ Jesus to possess the true life.*

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH [CA. 35-107 CE], EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS II:1  
[CA. 110 CE]<sup>26</sup>

### ***Reflection and Discussion***

Compare the following passages:

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:18)

I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. (Luke 12:5)

- What is the nature of “godly” or “holy” fear?
- What does it accomplish in the lives of those who seek to be faithful?
- How does it differ from all the other kinds of fear that we experience in life?

Did [God] send him, as [one] might suppose, to rule as a tyrant, to inspire terror and astonishment? No, he did not. No, he sent him in gentleness and mildness: as a king sending his royal son . . . as persuading, not exercising force (for force is no attribute of God). (*Epistle of Diognetus* 7:3-4 [ca. 200 CE])<sup>27</sup>



## **WRATH, RECONCILIATION, SALVATION**

*The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.*

1 TIMOTHY 1:15-16

### ***Reflection and Discussion***

For many people, having experienced human anger that was neither just nor tempered by mercy makes the notion of a righteous and gra-

cious divine anger seem incomprehensible, even ridiculous. Anger (above all, divine anger) seems by its very nature altogether terrifying. Especially if this is your experience, meditate on Paul's explanation of God's wrath and mercy in light of Jesus' death and resurrection:

God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. (Romans 5:8-10)

Reflect also upon the following:

He knows what He does; for He is long-suffering to all who are in impiety, as a merciful and philanthropic father, knowing that impious men become pious. (*Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 11.7.2 [fourth century CE])<sup>28</sup>

If God delays the punishment of sinners, waiting for them to repent, it is not because his character has changed, so that now he loves sin. Rather, he is giving them time to repent. (Cyril of Alexandria [ca. 378-444 CE])<sup>29</sup>

Three old men came to see Abba Sisoës, having heard about him. The first said to him, "Father, how shall I save myself from the river of fire?" He did not answer him. The second said to him, "Father, how can I be saved from the gnashing of teeth and the worm which dieth not?" The third said, "Father, what shall I do, for the remembrance of the outer darkness is killing me?" By way of reply [Abba Sisoës] said to them, "For my part, I do not keep in mind the remembrance of any of these things, for God is compassionate and I hope that he will show me his mercy." (*Apophthegmata Patrum*, Sisoës 19 [ca. sixth century CE])<sup>30</sup>



## PATIENCE, LOVE, AND LONG-SUFFERING

Call to mind particular instances in which your thoughts, attitudes, or actions have been guided by proportionate or disproportionate, justified or unjustified anger.

- Pray to understand God’s “long-suffering” and to receive the gift of forbearance.
- Pray for wisdom to understand and share in God’s response to injustice.

Let us, then, love the patience that is of God, the patience of Christ; let us return to Him that which He expended for us; let us who believe in the resurrection of the flesh and of the spirit offer Him both the patience of the spirit and the patience of the flesh. (Tertullian [ca. 160-225 CE], *On Patience* 16.5 [ca. 200 CE])<sup>31</sup>

And you the bishops, be not hard, nor tyrannical, nor wrathful ... but convert all, that you may be helpers with God; and gather the faithful with much meekness and long-suffering and patience, and without anger . . . as ministers of the kingdom everlasting. (*Didascalia Apostolorum* 2:57 [early third century CE])<sup>32</sup>



## HOLD US FAST, O LORD OF HOSTS

Recite the following prayer, by English theologian and reformer Bishop James Pilkington (1520-1576), or compose your own prayer asking to be given a deeper love, truer knowledge, and more faithful fear of God:

Hold us fast, O Lord of Hosts, that we fall not from thee. Grant us thankful and obedient hearts, that we may increase daily in the love, knowledge, and fear of thee. Increase our faith, and help our unbelief; that being provided for and relieved of all our needs by thy fatherly care and providence, we may live a godly life, to the praise and good example of thy people, and after this life may reign with thee for ever; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.<sup>33</sup>

This is the end of God’s patience and long-suffering towards us, to bring us to consideration. . . . He bears long with us, and delays the punishment of our sins, and doth not execute judgment speedily; because he is loth to surprize men into destruction; because he would give them the liberty of second thoughts, time to reflect upon themselves, and to consider what they have done, and to reason themselves into repentance. (Archbishop John Tillotson [1630-1694], Sermon 13, “The Nature and Benefit of Consideration” (Ps 119:59 [1675]))<sup>34</sup>



## LONGANIMITY

*God shows his Patience and his Longanimity in the most admirable manner. For although His majesty and power are infinite; and although everything takes place in His presence and before His eyes, yet He bears with everything patiently and long withholds His vengeance. . . . He even suffers infinite ingratitude and submits to an infinity of outrages with which mortals requite His countless benefits. . . . He bears with these injuries not only twice or thrice, or four, or five, or ten times, which no earthly prince would do, but a hundred times, nay a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred thousand times. Surely there is nothing to be compared to it and it surpasses the power of men or angels to fathom its mystery.*

**LEONARDUS LESSIUS, S.J. [1554-1623], FIFTY NAMES OF GOD OR DIVINE PERFECTIONS [1623/1640]<sup>35</sup>**

Although rarely used today, “longanimous” and “longanimity” are derived from the Latin words for “long” (*longus*) and “spirit” (*animus*). While “longanimity” appears in English texts from the fifteenth century onwards, the earliest known appearance of the corresponding adjective is from Sir Tobie Matthew’s 1620 translation (the first into English) of Augustine’s *Confessions* (written 397-398 CE), as the repentant saint laments the sins and follies of his wayward youth:

Thou seest these thinges, O Lord, and thou holdest thy peace, being longanimous, and full of mercy, and truth. But wilt thou forever hold thy peace? And not draw out of this vast and hideous pit, that soule which seeketh thee, and thirsteth after thy delights, and whose hart sayth to thee, *I have sought thy countenance*; and yet further, *I will seeke thy countenance, O Lord.* (Augustine, *Confessions* 1.18.28)<sup>36</sup>



## GOD’S DISCIPLINE

The following poem, by the English priest and metaphysical poet George Herbert (1593-1633), pleads with God for mercy to prevail over judgment. As far as you are able, make the poet’s plea your own.

*Discipline*

Throw away thy rod,	Then let wrath remove;
Throw away thy wrath:	Love will do the deed:
O my God,	For with love
Take the gentle path.	Stonie hearts will bleed.
For my hearts desire	Love is swift of foot;
Unto thine is bent:	Love's a man of warre,
I aspire	And can shoot,
To a full consent.	And can hit from farre.
Not a word or look	Who can scape his bow?
I affect to own,	That which wrought on thee,
But by book,	Brought thee low,
And thy book alone.	Needs must work on me.
Though I fail, I weep:	Throw away thy rod;
Though I halt in pace,	Though man frailties hath,
Yet I creep	Thou art God:
To the throne of grace.	Throw away thy wrath. <sup>37</sup>

When God finished the creation, He wrote in His book, which is there with Him, above the Throne, "Verily, My mercy overcomes My wrath." (Attributed to Muhammad by his companion Abu Hurayrah [603-681 CE])<sup>38</sup>

**"THE LORD IS LONG SUFFERING"**

Today the work of English composer and Oxford professor of music Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918) is largely unknown (one exception is the musical setting to William Blake's poem "Jerusalem" ["And did those feet, in ancient time / Walk upon England's mountains green?"], which featured in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*). But among his many other works is the 1888 oratorio that he called *Judith; or, the Regeneration of Manasseh*. It combines the story of biblical King Manasseh (exiled by the Babylonians but later allowed to return home) with that of the apocryphal Jewish heroine Judith, who saves her people by first charming, then decapitating the Assyrian general Holofernes.

According to Parry's musical version of the story, Meshullemeth (Manasseh's wife) sings the following solo to announce the return of the exiles to Jerusalem:

The Lord is long suffering and merciful;  
 He keepeth not His anger for ever.  
 He looketh on our affliction and pain, and hath forgiven us all our sins.  
 Even now, unto your mourning city, He bringeth home your king. . . .  
 Your streets again shall echo with your children's voices,  
 Your folds shall be full again with your bleating flocks;  
 Your fields shall also stand so thick with ripening corn  
 That they shall laugh and sing.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps in cooperation with one or two other people, make a list of the ways in which God has been patient with you, shown you mercy, or brought you out of personal exile. Together, recite a psalm (or a contemporary worship chorus) that expresses this sense of homecoming, or else compose your own lyrics and set them to music in celebration of all that God has done for you.



## ASLAN

The following passage is from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the first volume of C. S. Lewis's popular series for children, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. This conversation takes place between Lucy, Peter, Susan, and the Beavers, who are the children's animal hosts and protectors in a magical but broken land that has fallen under the spell of permanent winter. Their exchange concerns a great and mysterious lion named "Aslan":

"Is—is he a man?" asked Lucy.

"Aslan a man!" said Mr Beaver sternly. "Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-sea. Don't you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion."

"Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

“That you will, dearie, and no mistake,” said Mrs Beaver; “if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”

“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr Beaver; “don’t you hear what Mrs Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ’Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”<sup>40</sup>

### ***Reflection and Discussion***

In keeping with the generally accepted premise that Aslan is a sort of Christ figure, what practical difference is there between Jesus (or “the great Emperor”) being “good” and being “safe”?

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,  
And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.  
(Proverbs 16:32)



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# A GOD OF STEADFAST LOVE



*The world rests on three things: Torah, Avodah, and deeds of hesed.*

MISHNAH PIRQE ABOT 1:2

*From the very first the world was created only with mercy.*

ABOT DE RABBI NATHAN §4

## THE LESSONS OF LONG EXPERIENCE

Long experience brings perspective and humility to the life of faith. In the following psalm King David prays for deliverance from present distress while looking back on the errors of past years. In retrospect, he confesses his need for guidance, as well as his dependence on God's mercy, steadfast love, and faithfulness. As you reflect on your own journey of faith, use the following verses from Psalm 25 (with vocabulary from Exodus 34 highlighted) as a personal prayer:

<sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;

do not let me be put to shame;

do not let my enemies exult over me.

<sup>3</sup>Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;

let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your *truth*, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all day long.

<sup>6</sup>Be mindful of your *mercy*, O LORD, and of your *steadfast love*,  
for they have been from of old.

<sup>7</sup>Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your *steadfast love* remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

<sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

<sup>10</sup>All the paths of the LORD are *steadfast love* and *faithfulness*,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

<sup>11</sup>For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my *guilt*, for it is great.

<sup>12</sup>Who are they that fear the LORD?

He will teach them the way that they should choose.

(Psalm 25:1-12)

Compare this passage from the prophet Jeremiah:

Thus says the LORD:

Let not the wise boast in their wisdom,

let not the mighty boast in their might,

let not the wealthy boast in their wealth;

but let those who boast, boast in this,

that they understand and know me, that I am the LORD;

I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth,

for in these things I delight, says the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)



## FOR HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

*O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.*

PSALM 136:1

### *Reflection and Recitation*

Dividing each verse two parts, recite Psalm 136 antiphonally with one or more other people. Notice how the psalm suggests that our very existence, both physically (as part of creation) and spiritually (as the people of God), depends on God's character; the response to each

saving act of God is “For his steadfast love endures forever.”

Again using Psalm 136 as your model, compose your own recitation of God’s saving acts, perhaps (like the psalmist) moving from God’s creation of the universe to the “new creation” of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17); alternating between the personal, collective, and cosmic dimensions of salvation; or comparing God’s saving acts in the past, the present, and the future. After each element, add the psalmist’s refrain, “For his steadfast love endures forever,” and then recite your composition with one or more other voices.

And after these things you will remember the Lord and repent and He will bring you back, because He is merciful and compassionate, not reckoning evil to the sons of men, since they are flesh and the spirits of deceit deceive them in all their actions. (*Testament of Zebulon* 9:7 [second century BCE])<sup>41</sup>



## “I HAVE NOT RESTRAINED MY LIPS”

*I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation;  
see, I have not restrained my lips. . . .*

*I have not concealed your steadfast love [hesed] and your faithfulness [emet] from  
the great congregation.*

PSALM 40:9-10

### *Reflection and Discussion*

Imagine that you have been given an opportunity to share with your congregation the meaning of God’s steadfast love and faithfulness. What would you say in order to help them appreciate the full depth and wonder of God’s ways?

He shows mercy to [thousands,] to whoever loves him and whoever is faithful to him, for a thousand generations. (*Damascus Document* 20:21-22 [from Qumran, second to first centuries BCE])<sup>42</sup>



## RELYING ON GOD

From the lives of Boaz and David, Ruth and Mephibosheth, as well as many practical examples in the book of Psalms, it is clear that “steadfast love” expresses the theological essence of prayer. As it turns out, the word “prayer” itself is uniquely suited to the meaning of *hesed*. Walter Hobbs explains,

*Prayer . . . once meant a carefully worded request made by an individual or individuals of low social station to a more powerful figure. Sometimes it took the form of a legal process; sometimes it was less structured. But the stakes were always high. Moreover, the pray-er was always acutely aware that he or she had no claim of right in the matter. The grant of the request lay wholly in the discretion of the one to whom it had been brought. The pray-er was completely dependent upon the goodwill and the might of the one to whom the plea was addressed. Consequently, such “prayer” was serious business. A person did not take for granted the opportunity to petition the superior power. Nor was that opportunity exercised lightly when it materialized.*<sup>43</sup>

Yet, says Hobbs, congregational prayer in particular seems to lack this sense of need and reliance on God: “Seldom is prayer, especially corporate prayer, born of a sense of abject dependence upon the God of the universe for the determination of congregational ministry.”<sup>44</sup>

### *Reflection and Discussion*

- In what ways or to what extent does the ministry of your congregation depend directly on God’s “steadfast love”?
- What can your church and its leaders accomplish for themselves, what requires a partnership between them and God, and what can God alone accomplish on your behalf?

### *Prayer*

- Write a prayer or series of prayers for use in your congregation that express the nature of your reliance on God’s “steadfast love.”
- As you have opportunity, use what you have written in your personal

devotions, in your study group, or in the course of congregational worship.

### *Opportunity and Action*

- Discuss with the other members of your committee, deacon's board, parish council, or planning group how your interactions and deliberations could more directly reflect God's "steadfast love," both in relation to God and in relation to the people whom you serve.

Let steadfast love and faithfulness not forsake you;  
bind them around your neck,  
write them on the tablet of your heart.

Then you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and of people. (Proverbs 3:3-4)



## WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU?

*For I desire steadfast love [hesed] and not sacrifice, knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*

### HOSEA 6:6

*What does the LORD require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness [hesed], and to walk humbly with your God?*

### MICAH 6:8

In these passages Hosea's juxtaposition of "steadfast love" with "knowledge of God" suggests that they are parallel concepts; according to Micah, God requires us to demonstrate "justice" and "steadfast love" with one another.

### *Reflection and Discussion*

- In the past, when or in what way have you had opportunity to demonstrate abundant, generous, or unrepayable love to others, and what it has cost or taught you?

### *Opportunity and Action*

- What opportunities do you see at present for offering “unfailing love” to someone else, or in what circumstances does someone depend else on the “loving-kindness” that only you can offer?

Nothing so much pleases God as mercy. . . . Nothing incenses God so much as to be pitiless. (John Chrysostom [ca. 347-407 CE], *Homily 4*, on Philippians 1:22-26)<sup>45</sup>



### GEVUROT

This prayer, which celebrates the mighty works of a compassionate God, is the second in a series of ancient Jewish prayers known as the *Amidah* or *Shemoneh Esreh* (“Eighteen Benedictions”), which “form the central part of every synagogue service.”<sup>46</sup>

You are mighty forever, Lord,  
 You revive the dead,  
 You are powerful to save. . . .  
 You sustain the living with loving kindness [*hesed*],  
 Revive the dead in great compassion [*rahămim*],  
 Support the falling,  
 Heal the sick,  
 Free the captives,  
 And keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.  
 Who is like You,  
 Master of mighty deeds? . . .  
 Who is like You,  
 Compassionate Father,  
 Who remember your creatures unto life  
 With compassion?

Second to last among the same series of prayers is the following “Thanksgiving” (*Hoda’ah*) for all the ways in which God has shown mercy and kindness.

We give thanks unto you, who are the Lord our God, and the God of

our fathers, for all the good things, the kindness [*hesed*], and mercy [*rahāmîm*] which you have wrought, and done with us, and with our fathers before us. And if we said, “Our feet slip,” your kindness [*hesed*], O Lord, would secure us. Blessed are you, O Lord, to whom it is good to give thanks. (*Shemoneh Esreh* 18 [first to second centuries CE])<sup>47</sup>



## MERCY AMIDST THE BRIDESMAIDS

In the preface to his homilies on Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Chrysostom quotes the standard Greek translation of Proverbs 3:3 (“Let not *steadfast love* and *faithfulness* forsake you”), and then he expands on the role of personified “Mercy” using imagery from Jesus’ parable of the wise and the foolish bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13). The term for “mercy” that Chrysostom borrows from the Septuagint, *eleēmosynē* (itself a translation of *hesed*, “steadfast love”), often also means “alms, acts of charity” (for example, Acts 9:36; 10:4) and thus comes close to the sense of “deeds of loving-kindness”:

Listen to the helpful exhortation that says, “Let *acts of mercy* and *faithfulness* not forsake you” . . . “but bind them,” it says, “at your neck” (Prov 3:3). For just as the children of the well-to-do wear a gold ornament around their neck, never taking it off because it bears witness to their noble birth, likewise we should always wear mercy about ourselves, demonstrating that we are children of the One who shows compassion, who makes the sun rise “on the evil and on the good” (Matt 5:45). . . .

Such is the power of Mercy. . . . For she is known by the gatekeepers in the heavens, who guard the doors of the wedding hall; and not only known, but revered by them as well. Whoever she knows has honored her, she will lead in with great boldness. No one will rival her: all will give way. For if she led God down to earth, and convinced him to become human, how much more will she be able to lead humanity up to heaven. . . .

Let us love her; let us cherish her: not just for a day or two, but for the whole of time, that she may acknowledge us also. For if she should acknowledge us, the Lord will acknowledge us as well.<sup>48</sup>

In another of his parables Jesus encourages mercy:

Jesus asked, “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:36-37)



## AMAZING GRACE

According to the John Newton Project,<sup>49</sup> Newton, a converted ship’s captain and former slave trader (1725-1807), wrote his most famous hymn to accompany a sermon on the life of faith that he preached in the village church of Olney, Buckinghamshire, on New Year’s morning, 1773. It was published six years later in a collection of lyrics entitled *Olney Hymns* (London: W. Oliver, 1779) by Newton and the English poet William Cowper.

Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear,  
The hour I first believed!

### *Reflection and Discussion*

“Grace” is a difficult word to define in abstract terms, but it is relatively easy to explain using examples from personal experience (which is what John Newton does with the lyrics of this hymn). In the same way, how have you experienced grace, and what difference has it made to your life?

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)



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# A GOD TRUSTWORTHY AND TRUE



*O God, living Truth, unite me to yourself in everlasting love!*

THOMAS À KEMPIS [CA. 1380-1471],  
THE IMITATION OF CHRIST [1418], 1.3<sup>50</sup>

*For he is merciful whom you honor, and compassionate in whom you hope,  
and true so that He will do good to you and not evil.*

2 BARUCH 77:7 [SECOND CENTURY CE]<sup>51</sup>

## “LORD, I BELIEVE; HELP MY UNBELIEF”

- *Read* carefully a psalm, or an incident from the lives of Jesus and his disciples, or a passage from the New Testament letters that speaks to you of God’s faithfulness, trustworthiness, or reliability.
- *Discuss* or *meditate* on the ways in which the passage you have chosen describes God’s faithfulness, provides reasons for trusting God, or gives specific examples of people who trusted God in their own lives.
- *Pray* to know and experience God’s dependability, as described by Scripture.
- *Act* on the basis of God’s fidelity.
- *Share* with at least one other person what you are learning about God, about yourself, and about the life of faith.

R. Hanina said: The seal of the Holy One, blessed be He, is *’emet* [truth, truthfulness]. (Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 55a)<sup>52</sup>



## “FAITHFUL AND GRACIOUS”

The last of several acrostic compositions in the book of Psalms is Psalm 145 (other prominent examples are Psalms 9; 10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119). Some of these, however, are imperfect acrostics; they omit one or more of the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 145 was long thought to be imperfect, because in the best available manuscripts it lacked a verse beginning with the letter *nun*. Accordingly, the King James Version of Psalm 145:13-14 reads,

*Mem* (13th letter): Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

[*Nun* (14th letter) missing]

*Samek* (15th letter): The LORD upholdeth all that fall,  
and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

But a Psalms manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls (11QPsalms<sup>a</sup> 17:2-3) supplies the missing verse, which is now included in more recent translations such as the NIV and the NRSV (quoted here). The newly restored passage extols God’s consistent faithfulness and gracious loving-kindness:

*Mem*: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

*Nun*: The LORD is faithful [*ne’ēmān*] in all his words,  
and gracious [*hasid*] in all his deeds.

*Samek*: The LORD upholds all who are falling,  
and raises up all who are bowed down.

If you had to explain the meaning of this newly restored passage to someone who didn’t know much about the ways of God, how you help them understand what the psalmist has in mind? What might help such a person appreciate God’s graciousness and faithfulness?

Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love. (Wisdom of Solomon 3:9 [first century CE])



## ACTS OF FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

*So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.*

**JAMES 2:17**

Different churches and Christian traditions emphasize different ways of expressing faith in relation to faithfulness.

- In your congregation, which is more important: faithful belief or faithful action? Why do you think this is so?
- According to the tradition or denomination to which your church belongs, what expressions of belief and behavior are the truest signs of Christian identity (for example, biblical or creedal orthodoxy, personal morality, charismatic gifts, financial generosity, attendance at worship, social action)? In this tradition what does it mean to be a “real” Christian?
- As you understand it, to what extent is God responsible for enabling faith and faithfulness, and to what extent are these our own responsibility?
- In what ways does learning about God’s fidelity inspire you to respond with faith and faithfulness of your own?
- *Recall:* Think of an experience that stretched your faith in God or put your trust in God to the test.
- *Reflect:* What did you learn about God in the course of this experience? In what ways did your knowledge of God prove lacking or insufficient?
- *Read:* Who else, whether from Scripture, church history (both ancient and modern), or your own circle of acquaintances, has experienced a similar test of faith?
- *Respond:* Give thanks for what you have learned and the specific ways in which your faith has been strengthened; pray for the restoration of lost confidence; ask for a deeper trust and understanding of God’s ways.

O my God, I knocked at the door of Thy mercy with the hand of my hope. I fled unto Thee, seeking refuge from my multiplied sins and I

hung upon the borders of Thy garments with the fingers of my trust. So pardon, O God, the wrongs I have done, the evils and the sins, and rid me, O God, of my evil state, for Thou art my Lord and Sovereign, my reliance and my hope, the goal of my desire in my calamity and distress. (From an anonymous, undated Sufi prayer)<sup>53</sup>



### ALMSGIVING: “THE PLEDGES OF PIETY”

In a famous passage that he composed around 197 CE, Tertullian of Carthage (ca. 160–225) explains how, as an expression of their love, Christians disburse the donations that each contributes to a common fund (or “stock”). The text cited here (complete with archaic spelling) is that of Henry Brown, *Tertullians Apology; or, Defense of the Christians against the Accusations of the Gentiles* (1655), the earliest translation of this work into English.

Riches gathered in this manner are as the pledges of piety. . . . We employ them in feeding the poore, and burying them, in comforting children that are destitute of parents and goods, in helping old men who have spent their best days in the service of the faithfull, in helping the poore that have lost by shipwracke what they had, and in assisting them that serve in the mines, are banished into Islands, or shut up in prisons, because they professe the Religion of the true God, that during the time they suffer for the confession of his name, they may be nourished with the stocke of the Church. But its a strang thing that this charity among us gives occasion to som to blame us. See, say they, how they love one another. (Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 39.6–7)<sup>54</sup>

God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:9)



### GOOD WORKS, COMPASSION, AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD

In the following passage from his commentary on the book of Romans, Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) explains that God demonstrates

mercy first by calling us to himself, then by pouring out his Holy Spirit upon us, thereby making us merciful and compassionate in turn:

“I will have mercy on whom I will have had mercy, and I will show him compassion on whom I will have had compassion” [Rom 9:15]. . . . God was merciful to us the first time when he called us while we were still sinners. “On whom I will have had mercy,” he says, “so that I called him,” and *still* “I will have mercy on him” yet again once he has believed. Yet how does God have mercy this second time? He gives to the believing seeker the Holy Spirit. Now, having given the Spirit, God will then give compassion to those to whom he has already been compassionate. That is, he will make the believer compassionate, so that he can do good works through love. Hence let no one dare to credit himself when he acts compassionately, since God gave him this love through the Holy Spirit, without which no one can be compassionate. . . . It is we who believe and will, but he who gives to those believing and willing the ability to do good works through the Holy Spirit, through which the love of God is poured forth in our hearts, thus making us compassionate. (Augustine, *Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans* 61.1-5, 7 [ca. 395 CE])<sup>55</sup>

- *Read:* Galatians 5:22-23
- *Reflect:* Included on this list are “kindness” (or “mercy”), “goodness” (which might equally be translated as “generosity”), and “faith” or “faithfulness” (the word *pistis* can mean both “trust” and “trustworthiness”). How, as you see it, does the Holy Spirit make it possible for us to trust or believe, create fidelity, inspire kindness, or help us to remain faithful?
- *Respond:* Along the lines suggested by Paul and Augustine, pray for the Spirit of God to transform your character, keep you faithful, inspire mercy, and enable you to act with compassion.

He has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.” So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?” (Hebrews 13:5-6)



**FOR FURTHER READING**

- Henry Blackaby, Richard Blackaby, and Claude King. *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. Rev. ed. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008.
- Richard B. Hays. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Ian G. Wallis. *The Faith of Christ in Early Christian Traditions*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

## A GOD OF FORGIVENESS AND JUSTICE



*So said the Holy One, blessed be He, "If I create the world in accord with the attribute of mercy, sins will multiply. If I create it in accord with the attribute of justice, the world cannot endure. Lo, I shall create it with both the attribute of justice and the attribute of mercy, and may it endure!" Thus, "The Lord [standing for the attribute of mercy] God [standing for the attribute of justice] [made the earth and the heavens]"*

GEN 2:4 (GENESIS RABBAH 12:15 [FIFTH CENTURY CE])<sup>56</sup>

*Before the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world He created Repentance. He said to Repentance, "I want to create man in such a way that if they return to you from their iniquities you will be prepared to wipe out their sins and forgive them."*

ZOHAR 3:69B-70A [TWELFTH CENTURY CE]<sup>57</sup>

### FORGIVE US OUR SINS

#### *Reflection*

Put yourself in the place of Jonah before he agrees to visit Nineveh, while he is there, and following the repentance of its inhabitants.

- In your own circumstances, who or what do you find most difficult to forgive, and why?
- If you were God, what would you say or do in response to this situation?

Put yourself in the place of the Ninevites, both before Jonah's visit and in its aftermath.

- For what specific reasons, or for what specific failings, do you find it most difficult to receive God's forgiveness, and why?
- If you were God, what would you say or do in reply?

### *Prayer and Meditation*

From the patristic era onward, Christians have meditated on Psalms 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; and 143 (the "Seven Penitential Psalms") as expressions of repentance for wrongdoing and confidence in God's forgiveness. While confessing the personal and social dimensions of sin, these psalms urge us to entrust ourselves to God's mercy, compassion, faithfulness, and steadfast love.

- Read one psalm each day over the course of a week, both on your own behalf and on behalf of other sinners.
- Memorize one phrase or verse from each psalm as a reminder of God's gracious response to human sin.

Be blessed, God of compassion and kindness,  
 through your great goodness,  
 through the abundance of your truth,  
 and through your great kindness towards all your works.  
 Gladden the soul of your servant with your truth  
 and purify me with your justice  
 since I have trusted in your goodness  
 and I have hoped in your favour.  
 By your forgiveness you will open my hope,  
 in my distress you will comfort me,  
 for I have leaned on your compassion.

(1QH 19:29-32 [a hymn of the Qumran community, second to first centuries BCE])<sup>58</sup>

Deal with us, O YHWH, according to your kindness,  
 According to your abundant compassion and the great number of your  
 just acts.

YHWH has heard the outcry of those loving his Name and has not  
 denied them his goodness.  
 Blessed be YHWH who performs just deeds and crowns his devout with  
 goodness and compassion. . . .  
 For my sins I was on the point of dying and my iniquities sold me to  
 Sheol.  
 But you, YHWH, saved me according to your abundant compassion and  
 the great number of your just acts.  
 I too have loved your Name and I have looked for sanctuary in  
 your shade.  
 The memory of your power strengthens my heart.  
 I relax in your goodness.  
 Pardon my sins, YHWH, and cleanse me from my iniquity. . . .  
 Because you, YHWH, are my praise and in you I hope all day. . . .  
 In you shall I be happy forever.  
 (11QPsalms<sup>a</sup> 19:4-18 [an apocryphal psalm from Qumran, second to  
 first centuries BCE])<sup>59</sup>



## DANIEL'S CONFESSION

Read Daniel 9:4-19. Following the model of Daniel's prayer of confession, call to mind and confess before a holy God the various sins

- that you yourself have committed;
- that other members of your family have committed;
- of which your faith community, church, or denomination is guilty;
- committed by your city, nation, or ethnic group.

As part of your confession, consider making restitution wherever this is possible or appropriate.

Read Ephesians 1:3-10, and meditate on the work of Christ that makes forgiveness possible for the sins you have confessed.

For it is in the power of God alone to grant the forgiveness of sins, and not to impute transgressions; since also the Lord commands us each day to forgive the repenting brethren. "And if we, being evil, know to give

good gifts,” much more is it the nature of the Father of mercies, the good Father of all consolation, much pitying, very merciful, to be long-suffering, to wait for those who have turned. And to turn is really to cease from our sins, and to look no longer behind. (Clement of Alexandria [ca. 150-215 CE], *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* 39 [ca. 200 CE])<sup>60</sup>



## LOST SHEEP AND WANDERING FLOCKS

In Matthew 18:12-14 Jesus tells a parable about a shepherd in search of lost sheep, then in Matthew 18:15-18 he sets out a four-stage procedure for dealing with sin and broken relationships within the church. According to this passage,

- what are God’s priorities in regard to sin and forgiveness?
- what is the role of the church?
- how might these principles be implemented within your own congregation?

In Ephesians 4:32–5:1, Paul instructs the church, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. . . . Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” In what specific ways do these instructions apply to you and your fellow worshipers? What difference would their implementation make to your worship, to the life of your community, and to its ministry to the world at large?

And this is what God saith elsewhere, “Requiting the sins of the fathers upon children for the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” [Exodus 20:5].

Not as though one were to suffer punishment for the crimes committed by others, but inasmuch as they who, after many sin and have been punished, yet have not grown better, but have committed the same offenses, are justly worthy to suffer their punishments also. (John Chrysostom [ca. 347-407 CE], *Homily 74*, on Matthew 23:29-30)<sup>61</sup>

It is thus that he visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation; [by] not punishing those who sin immediately but pardoning their first offences and only passing sentence on them for their last. For if it were otherwise and if God were to stand forth on the moment as the avenger of iniquity, the church would lose many of its saints; and certainly would be deprived of the apostle Paul. (Jerome [ca. 345-420 CE], *Letter* 147.3)<sup>62</sup>



## COMMINATION

Although not a word that we use much these days, “comminate” means “to threaten with divine vengeance”; similarly, “commination” is the threat or denunciation itself. Those who first framed the English liturgy were of the view that recalling God’s wrath and justice might prove effective in bringing sinners to repentance, so they devised a prayer service with this goal in mind. Anglican theologian John Webster explains further, commending the prayer for contemporary devotion:

Tucked away in the Church of England’s *Book of Common Prayer* is a little service for Ash Wednesday called “A Commination, or denouncing of God’s anger and judgments against sinners” intended by the English Reformers as a Protestant alternative to public penance. It ends with this wonderful prayer, which we may make our own:

*Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so we shall be turned; be favourable, O Lord, be favourable to thy people, who turn to thee in weeping, fasting and praying. For thou art a merciful God, full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great pity. Thou sparest us when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy. Spare thy people, good Lord.... Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great, and after the multitude of thy mercies look upon us; through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*<sup>63</sup>

Beg your Lord to forgive you, and turn to Him. Indeed my Lord is compassionate and loving. (*Qur’an*, Sura 11:90 [seventh century CE])

Christ said, “Make frequent mention of God the Exalted, also of His praise and glorification, and obey Him. It suffices for one of you when

praying, and if God is truly pleased with him, to say, ‘O God, forgive my sins, reform my way of life, and keep me safe from hateful things, O my God.’”

Christ said, “If you desire to devote yourselves entirely to God and to be the light of the children of Adam, forgive those who have done you evil, visit the sick who do not visit you, be kind to those who are not kind to you, and lend to those who do not repay you.” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal [Sunni theologian and jurist, 780–855 CE])<sup>64</sup>



## FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

Call to mind those you know whose profound suffering has made them unable to forgive. Pray that

- God would grant them consolation, an appropriate measure of justice, and freedom from the tyranny of their affliction;
- they would find a place for their suffering in the suffering of Jesus;
- they would share with him what they cannot bear alone.

How blest are the peacemakers; God shall call them his sons. (Matthew 5:9)

You see, beloved and dear children, how abundant are the mercies of the Lord our God and his goodness and loving-kindness towards us, and (how) He exhorts them that have sinned to repent. . . . He gives no place to the thought of those who are hard of heart and wish to judge strictly and without mercy, and to cast away altogether them that have sinned as though there were no repentance for them. But God (is) not so . . . even sinners he calls to repentance and gives them hope. (*Didascalia Apostolorum* 2:15 [early third century CE])<sup>65</sup>



## FOLLOWING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS

### *Meditation*

- What have you learned from your mother and father, uncles and aunts, godparents or grandparents, about the character and ways of God?

- In what ways have they misrepresented God, or led you apart from God's ways?
- What have you modeled and taught your own children, godchildren, or grandchildren about the ways of God, and in what ways have you or they failed in this task?

### *Prayer*

For yourself, your parents, your siblings, your children, or others in your family, rejoicing at ways in which these relationships reflect God's character, and seeking forgiveness for ways in which God's image has been obscured or betrayed.

Lord, I am not worthy of Your comfort, nor of any spiritual consolation. You deal justly with me when You leave me poor and desolate. Could I shed a sea of tears, I should still not deserve Your comfort. I merit nothing but scourging and punishment, for I have gravely and frequently offended You, and have done much evil. All things considered, then, I do not deserve the smallest consolation. Yet, most gracious and merciful God, You do not will that any of Your creatures should perish. Desiring to show Your generosity and goodness to those who receive your mercy, You reach down to comfort Your servant above his deserts, and in ways above man's knowledge; for Your consolation is not as the empty words of men. (Thomas à Kempis [ca. 1380-1471], *The Imitation of Christ* [1418], 3.52)<sup>66</sup>



## **WILL GOD NOT BE MERCIFUL?**

### *Meditation*

From the traditions of the Orthodox Church comes the following story, concerning a monk who lived in the Egyptian desert.

An elder was asked by a certain soldier if God would forgive a sinner. And he said to him: Tell me, beloved, if your cloak is torn, will you throw it away? The soldier replied and said: No. I will mend it and put it back on. The elder said to him: If you take care of your cloak, will God not be merciful to his own image? (*Verba Seniorum* 139 [sixth century CE])<sup>67</sup>

### ***Prayer***

Call to mind the faces of people whose sins and offenses are such that it is difficult for you to see the image of God in them. Pray to see them as God sees them. Pray that you may also discern God's image in yourself.

It is the comfort of saints, that they have to do with a forgiving God, that can multiply pardons, as they multiply sins. (John Trapp [1601-1669], *Annotations on the Books of the Old and New Testaments* [1662])<sup>68</sup>

Those Attributes that declare God's goodness, as when he is said to be gracious, or merciful and long-suffering, they shew what God is in himself, and delights to be: those which declare his wrath and severity, shew what he is upon provocation, and the occasion of sin; not what he chuseth to be, but what we do as it were compel and necessitate him to be. (Archbishop John Tillotson [1630-1694], Sermon 5, "The Mercy of God" [Numbers 14:18])<sup>69</sup>



### **FOR FURTHER READING**

Jacques Ellul. *The Judgment of Jonah*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.

Richard Holloway. *On Forgiveness: How Can We Forgive the Unforgivable?* Edinburgh: Canongate, 2002.

Simon Wiesenthal. *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*. Edited by Bonny V. Fetterman and Harry J. Cargas. New York: Random House, 1998.

## CONCLUSIONS— GOD IN OUR MIDST



*Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.*

1 JOHN 3:2

*The object of the enumeration of God's thirteen attributes is the lesson that we should acquire similar attributes and act accordingly.*

MOSES MAIMONIDES [1135-1204 CE],  
GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED [CA. 1190], 3.54<sup>70</sup>

### AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD?

Either by yourself or in cooperation with a group of other people, devise a strategy by which (along the lines of Joseph's conduct with his brothers) you will consciously seek to imitate at least one divine quality per day over the course of a week or more. One day you might try to be transparently gracious or unexpectedly generous and compassionate; the next day, unflappably patient and long-suffering; a third day, utterly trustworthy or outrageously forgiving, and so on. At the end of the week evaluate your efforts. In what ways have you been successful or unsuccessful, and what have you learned about God in the process?

Him must we worship by the practice of virtue; for that is the most saintly manner of worshipping God. (Flavius Josephus [ca. 37-100 CE], *Against Apion* 2 §192)<sup>71</sup>

The light of the Lord of the Spirits is seen upon the face of the holy, the righteous, and the elect. (*1 Enoch* 38:4 [first century CE or earlier])<sup>72</sup>



## “WHOEVER HAS SEEN ME HAS SEEN THE FATHER”

*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. . . . I am in the Father and the Father is in me.*

JOHN 14:9-10

### *Reflection*

- What are some of the ways in which you already know Jesus and the One whom he called “Father?”
- In what ways does the identity of Jesus or the reality of God seem obscure or invisible?

### *Prayer*

- Pray that you may see Jesus more clearly and fully.
- Pray that through him you may see his Father more intimately, as he did.
- Pray for Jesus’ promise to be fulfilled in you: “You will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (John 14:20).

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

### **Holy Week**

Catholic devotional tradition includes the practice of meditating on the fourteen Stations of the Cross as a way of tracing the last steps of Jesus’ life from condemnation by Pilate to crucifixion and entombment. As a variation on this theme, read through one or more of the accounts of Matthew 26:1–28:10; Mark 14:1–16:8; Luke 22:1–24:11; John 18:1–20:18, then meditate on the events of Holy Week as expressions of God’s compassion, mercy, forbearance, steadfast love, faithfulness, forgiveness, and justice. Consider each divine attribute in turn and reflect

on its significance for your own pilgrimage, for your community, and for the world at large.

Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. (John 12:26)



## LIKE A GOD TO HIS BENEFICIARIES

The *Epistle to Diognetus* is one of numerous works written in the second century CE (in this case, anonymously) to explain the Christian faith to a pagan world and to distinguish its customs and beliefs from those of Judaism. Yet as is evident from the following quotations, its understanding of God is clearly Jewish in origin. After describing the character of God, the author argues that God's goodness and love, revealed by Jesus, inspire his followers to act in the same manner towards others, so that they in turn appear as "gods" to those they serve.

God, the master and creator of the universe . . . was shown to be not only loving to men but also long-suffering. Yes, such as he always was and is and will be: kind, and good, and free from anger, and true, and he alone is good. (*Epistle to Diognetus* 8:7-8)

Having this knowledge [*of God's nature*] with what joy do you suppose you will be filled? How will you love him who so loved you first? Why, in loving him you will be an imitator of his kindness. (*Epistle to Diognetus* 10:3-4)

Any man who takes upon himself his neighbor's load, who is willing to use his superiority to benefit one who is worse off, who supplies to the needy the possessions he has as a gift from God and thus becomes a god to his beneficiaries—such a man is an imitator of God. (*Epistle to Diognetus* 10:6)<sup>73</sup>

Meditate on the following reflections from Gregory and the desert fathers:

The end of the life of virtue is to become like . . . God. (Gregory of Nyssa [ca. 330-395], *Homilies on the Beatitudes* 1.4 (ca. 378 CE))<sup>74</sup>

They said of Abba Pambo that he was like Moses, who received the image of the glory of Adam when his face shone. His face shone like lightning and he was like a king sitting on his throne. It was the same with Abba Sylvanus and Abba Sisoës. (*Apophthegmata Patrum*, Pambo 12 [ca. sixth century CE])<sup>75</sup>



## LIKENESS TO GOD

- Who, of all the people you know, “imitates” the God of Israel and Jesus most fully or faithfully?
- In whom do you see God most clearly?
- What godly or “Godlike” qualities that you see in these people?
- Is this something they do consciously or unconsciously?
- What inspires this conduct in them, or what makes it possible for them to act in this way?

You should know that it was the saying of the Messenger of God . . . which brought me to mention these counsels following the names and attributes [of God]: “You should be characterized by the characteristics of God most high”; as well as his saying. . . . : “Given that God is characterized by the ninety-nine [names], whoever is characterized by one of them enters paradise.” (Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī [1058-1111 CE], *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God* II.1 Epilogue)<sup>76</sup>

## “TO YOU, O LORD, I LIFT UP MY SOUL”

Use the following verses from Psalm 25 (with vocabulary from Exodus 34 highlighted) as a personal, group, or congregational prayer:

<sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;

do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.

<sup>3</sup>Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;

let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.

- <sup>5</sup>Lead me in your *truth*, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.
- <sup>6</sup>Be mindful of your *mercy*, O LORD, and of your *steadfast love*,  
for they have been from of old.
- <sup>7</sup>Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your *steadfast love* remember me, for your goodness' sake,  
O LORD!
- <sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the  
way.
- <sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.
- <sup>10</sup>All the paths of the LORD are *steadfast love* and *faithfulness*,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.
- <sup>11</sup>For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my *guilt*, for it is great.
- <sup>12</sup>Who are they that fear the LORD?  
He will teach them the way that they should choose.

God's mercy toward sinners and the call for them to respond with godly conduct are highlighted in the Wisdom of Solomon:

But you, our God, are kind and true, patient, and ruling all things in mercy. For even if we sin we are yours, knowing your power; but we will not sin, because we know that you acknowledge us as yours. For to know you is complete righteousness, and to know your power is the root of immortality. (Wisdom of Solomon 15:1-3 [first century CE])



## FINDING GRACE IN GOD'S SIGHT

### *Study and Reflection*

Reflect on the following passage from book 1, chapter 54, of Moses Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*:

The wisest man, our Teacher Moses, asked two things of God, and received a reply respecting both. The one thing he asked was that God should let him know His true essence; the other, which in fact he asked first, that God should let him know His attributes. In answer to both these petitions God promised that He would let him know all His at-

tributes, and that these were nothing but His actions. He also told him that His true essence could not be perceived, and pointed out a method by which he could obtain the utmost knowledge of God possible for [one] to acquire. The knowledge obtained by Moses has not been possessed by any human being before him or after him. His petition to know the attributes of God is contained in the following words: “Show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight” (Exod 33:13). Consider how many excellent ideas found expression in the words, “Show me thy way, that I may know thee.” We learn from them that God is known by His attributes, for Moses believed that he knew Him, when he was shown the way of God. The words “That I may find grace in thy sight” imply that [whoever] knows God finds grace in His eyes.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Prayer***

Now and at the beginning of each day, make the prayer of Moses your own (see Exodus 33:13):

Lord God of mercy,  
 Show me your ways this day,  
 So that I may know you;  
 So that I and all your people  
 may find grace and favour in your sight.

In a saying attributed to Martin Luther (1483-1546) we read, “I would give two hundred golden guilders if I could pray like the Jews. They have learned it from the magnificent prayers of their teacher Moses, and he was taught by God Himself!”<sup>78</sup>



## **YOU WILL BE CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH**

*Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.*

**MATTHEW 5:44**

*Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.*

**LUKE 6:35**

***Reflection***

Who is your personal enemy, or the enemy of your family, close friend, congregation, neighborhood, ethnic group, or nation?

***Prayer***

For a set period of time, commit to praying daily for your enemy.

***Opportunity and Action***

Put yourself in the place of God: offer a specific gesture of unrepayable kindness and generosity to an enemy or someone who hates you, expecting nothing in return.

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace. (James 3:17-18)

What is swifter than loving-kindness [*philanthrōpia*]? The disciples call down the fire of Sodom upon those who contend with Jesus, but he steers clear of vengeance. Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, one of those who mistreated him, but Jesus restores it. And what of the one who asked if he should forgive a brother who stumbles seven times? Is such pettiness not condemned? For to that seven, he adds seventy times seven! What about the debtor in the gospels, who will not forgive he what has been forgiven? Is it not exacted from him more bitterly on account of this? . . . Having so many examples, let us imitate the loving-kindness of God. (Gregory of Nazianzus [329-389 CE], *Letter 77*, to Bishop Theodoros of Tyana [ca. 379])<sup>79</sup>

**AN “ACT OF PLEADING”**

Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) never intended his collection of *Preces Privatae* (“Private Devotions”) to be published, but shortly before his death he entrusted a copy to fellow bishop William Laud (and possibly others). Originally written in Latin and Greek, they were gradually translated into English and have since become famous for their depth of devotion and unflinching exploration of the human need for God’s mercy and grace. As a skilled linguist conversant in fifteen

languages, Andrewes was one of a “company” of ten responsible for translating the books from Genesis through Second Kings of the King James Bible (published in 1611). His prayers repeatedly echo the language of Scripture, and of texts that he helped translate in particular:

Because the Lord is full of compassion and mercy,  
 longsuffering and of great goodness:  
 He will not always be chiding,  
 neither keepeth He his anger for ever:  
 He hath not dealt with us after our sins,  
 neither rewarded us according to our wickednesses:  
 for look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth;  
 so great is his mercy also toward them that fear Him:  
 look how wide also the east is from the west;  
 so far hath He set our sins from us.  
 Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children,  
 even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him.  
 Because the Lord is good and gracious,  
 and of great mercy unto all them that call upon Him:  
 the Lord is loving unto every man,  
 and his mercy is over all his works.  
 Because He delighteth in mercy:  
 He is the Father of mercy:  
 He is mercy:  
 to Whom  
 to have mercy is his proper work,  
 to punish is a foreign and a strange act. . . .  
 Let the power of my Lord be great according as He hath proclaimed  
 saying:  
 THE LORD IS LONGSUFFERING AND OF GREAT MERCY,  
 FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION.<sup>80</sup>

In a similar vein, Bishop Jeremy Taylor prays,

O Almighty Judge of Men and Angels . . . Give to thy servant a meek and a gentle spirit, that I also may be slow to anger, and easie to mercy and forgiveness. (Bishop Jeremy Taylor [1613-1667], *The Golden Grove* [1654/1655])<sup>81</sup>



## THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD

Listed below are some of the passages that reflect the language of Exodus 34. There are thirty-six from the Hebrew Bible (the first of which includes a duplicate), five from the Apocrypha, and eleven from the New Testament. Review as many of them as you can, perhaps at a rate of one or two per day over the course of several weeks. Meditate on these passages and commit to memory those that speak to your own circumstances with particular depth and clarity.

### *Hebrew Bible*

Exodus 20:5-6 (= Deuteronomy 5:9-11)	Psalm 33:4-5 Psalm 40:10-11 Psalm 51:1-2	Jeremiah 32:18 Lamentations 3:22-24 Ezekiel 18:1-4
Exodus 33:19	Psalm 77:8-9	Daniel 9:4-5
Numbers 6:24-26	Psalm 86:15	Hosea 2:19
Numbers 14:17-18	Psalm 89:1-2	Hosea 6:6
Deuteronomy 7:9-10	Psalm 103:8-9	Joel 2:12-14
Deuteronomy 24:16	Psalm 106:45-46	Jonah 4:2
2 Kings 14:6	Psalm 145:8-9	Micah 7:18-20
2 Chronicles 30:9	Isaiah 30:18	Nahum 1:2-3
Nehemiah 9:17, 31-32	Isaiah 54:7-10	Habakkuk 3:2
Psalm 23:6	Isaiah 63:7	Zechariah 7:8-10
Psalm 25:6-10	Jeremiah 31:28-30	

### *Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Works*

Prayer of Manasseh 1:7	Sirach 5:4-6	4 Ezra 7:132-140
Sirach 2:11	Wisdom 15:1	

### *New Testament*

Luke 6:36	2 Corinthians 1:3	2 Peter 3:9
John 1:14, 17	Hebrews 2:17-18	1 John 4:16-18
Romans 9:15-16	James 1:19	Revelation 19:11-12
Romans 12:1	James 5:11	

Our eternal Saviour, the King of gods, who alone art almighty, and the Lord, the God of all beings, and the God of our holy and blameless fathers, and of those before us; the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; who art merciful and compassionate, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy; to whom every heart is naked, and by whom every heart is seen, and to whom every secret thought is revealed: to Thee do the souls of the righteous cry aloud, upon Thee do the hopes of the godly trust. (*Apostolic Constitutions* 7.33.2 [fourth century CE])<sup>82</sup>



### FOR FURTHER READING

Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazālī. *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*. Translated by David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1995.

Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon. *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1989.

James L. Kugel. *The Bible As It Was*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1997.

Michael Widmer. *Moses, God, and the Dynamics of Intercessory Prayer: A Study of Exodus 32-34 and Numbers 13-14*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2/8. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004. See chapter 7, “The Revelation of God’s Name,” pp. 169-203.

# APPENDIX

## CHRONOLOGY OF PERSONS AND DOCUMENTS

The following chronology does not attempt to be either exhaustive or definitive, but seeks simply to provide an approximate sense of how some of the many figures and sources quoted in *The Unfolding Mystery of the Divine Name: The God of Sinai in Our Midst* and the foregoing study guide relate to one another chronologically. Discussion of specific documents can be found within footnotes throughout the book, although it should be kept in mind that, however vexing this may seem for those in search of certainty, the dates assigned to particular individuals (for example, Abraham and the Patriarchs, Daniel, Jonah), events (such as the exodus), or literary works (for example, Esther, the Targums, or *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah*) may be speculative, controverted, imprecise, and/or historically indeterminable.

In the case of biblical documents and figures, some of the dates cited below derive from the “Timeline” and “Chronological Table of Rulers” in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Michael D. Coogan et al. (3rd ed.; Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 526-33. The chief source for the dating of rabbinic documents and authorities is H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), while dates cited for Christian texts and commentators depend in large measure on F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Persons and Events	Documents
Mursilis II	1300 BCE
Moses and the exodus	
Abraham and Sarah	1200 BCE
	1100 BCE
Saul (ca. 1025-1005)	
David (ca. 1005-965)	1000 BCE
Solomon (968-928)	
	900 BCE
	800 BCE
Amos, Hosea	
Isaiah	
Micah	
Hezekiah (ca. 727-698)	700 BCE
Manasseh (ca. 698-642)	
Josiah (640-609)	
Nahum	
Jeremiah, Habakkuk	600 BCE
Nebuchadnezzar (605-562)	
Jehoiakim (608-598)	
Jehoiachin (597)	
Zedekiah (597-586)	
Ezekiel	500 BCE

<b>Persons and Events</b>		<b>Documents</b>
Haggai, Zechariah (ca. 520)		
Nehemiah (ca. 445-430)		
Ezra	400 BCE	
Xerxes the Great (485-465)		
Artaxerxes	300 BCE	Esther (ca. 400-114?)
Simeon the Just (?)	200 BCE	Tobit
		Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
		<i>Letter of Aristeas</i>
		<i>Jubilees</i>
Qumran community (ca. 130-68)	100 BCE	<i>Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
		Septuagint
		Prayer of Manasseh
		2 Maccabees
Jesus of Nazareth (ca. 6 BCE-30 CE)	1 CE	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>
Saul of Tarsus [Paul] (ca. 1-65)		Wisdom of Solomon
		<i>Shemoneh Esreh</i>
Flavius Josephus (ca. 37-100)		<i>Liber Antiquitatem Biblicarum</i>
Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 35-117?)		Similitudes of Enoch
		<i>Targum Onqelos</i>
R. Ishmael b. Elisha (ca. 90-130)		New Testament Gospels
Clement of Rome (ca. 100)	100 CE	<i>4 Ezra, 1 Clement</i>
R. Eleazar [ben Shammua] (ca. 130-160)		<i>Testament of Abraham</i>
R. Meir of Tiberias (ca. 130-160)		<i>2 Baruch</i>

Persons and Events	Documents
R. Simeon ben Yoḥai (ca. 130-160)	
R. Simeon ben Gamaliel II (ca. 130-160)	
Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 130-200)	
Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215)	
R. Judah ha-Nasi (ca. 135-217)	
Tertullian of Carthage (ca. 160-225)	200 CE <i>Epistle of Diognetus</i>
Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185-254)	Mishnah
R. Simlai	<i>Didascalia Apostolorum</i>
Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258)	Liturgy of St. James
R. Joḥanan bar Nafcha (d. 279)	<i>Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael</i>
R. Abbahu (d. 309?)	300 CE <i>Abot de Rabbi Nathan</i>
Athanasius (ca. 296-373)	Sifra, Sifre
Abba Pambo (ca. 303-337)	<i>Targum Neofiti</i>
Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 303-373)	Tosefta
Abba Sisoës	
Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315-387)	
Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389)	
Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330-395)	
John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407)	<i>Pseudo-Clementine Homilies</i>
Jerome (ca. 345-420)	
R. Raba (d. 352)	
Cyril of Alexandria (ca. 378-444)	400 CE <i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>
Augustine of Hippo (354-430)	Vulgate Bible
	Jerusalem Talmud
	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i>
	<i>Leviticus Rabbah</i>

<b>Persons and Events</b>		<b>Documents</b>
Cassiodorus (ca. 487-585)	500 CE	<i>Seder Eliyahu Rabbah</i> , <i>Seder Eliyahu Zuta</i> (3rd-8th century?) <i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> (4th-7th century?) <i>Verba Seniorum</i>
Muhammad (ca. 570-632)		
Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580-662)	600 CE	Babylonian Talmud (ca. 500-750)
Abu Hurayrah (603-681)		Qur'an
Isaac of Syria (ca. 660-700)		<i>Apophthegmata Patrum</i>
John of Damascus (ca. 655-750)		
Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (d. 693)	700 CE	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i> <i>Midrash Tanhuma</i> (5th-9th century?) Gelasian Sacramentary
Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855)	800 CE	<i>Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer</i>
Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d. 898)	900 CE	
Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839-923)		
Amittai b. Shephatiah al-Samarqandi (d. 983)		<i>Exodus Rabbah</i>
al-ʿAmiri (d. 992)	1000 CE	
Solomon bar Isaac ["Rashi"] (1040-1105)		
Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111)		
Peter Abelard (1079-1142)	1100 CE	

<b>Persons and Events</b>		<b>Documents</b>
Moses Maimonides (1135-1204)		
Saadi (ca. 1200-1292)	1200 CE	<i>Sefer Babir</i> <i>A Guide for the Perplexed</i>  <i>Sefer ha-Zohar</i>
Joshua Ibn Shueib (b. ca. 1290)	1300 CE	
Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471)	1400 CE	
Solomon ibn Verga (1460-1554)		
Martin Luther (1483-1546)	1500 CE	
Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)		
James Pilkington (1520-1576)		Tyndale's Pentateuch (1530)
Leonardus Lessius (1554-1623)		First English Prayer Book (1549)
Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626)		
Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)		
George Herbert (1593-1633)		
John Trapp (1601-1669)	1600 CE	Douay-Rheims Bible (1609-1610)
Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)		
Brother Lawrence (ca. 1614-1691)		Westminster Confession (1648)
John Tillotson (1630-1694)		
Israel b. Eliezer (ca. 1700-1760)	1700 CE	
Charles Wesley (1707-1788)		
John Newton (1725-1807)	1800 CE	
C. H. H. Parry (1848-1918)	1900 CE	
Karl Barth (1886-1968)	2000 CE	

# NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Luz Iglesias for her wisdom, practical assistance, and encouragement in the preparation of this guide.
- <sup>2</sup>Lawrence of the Resurrection, *The Life of Nicolas Herman: A Native of Lorraine; Wherein Are Set Forth the Great Advantages That Arise to a Christian, by Preserving in His Mind a Constant Sense of the Divine Presence. Done Out of French. To Which Are Subjoined, Meditations on the Lord's Prayer, Translated from the Spanish of Lewis of Granada* (Edinburgh: William Monro, 1727), 104.
- <sup>3</sup>On these and other alternatives, see Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Image: Religious Anthropology in Judaism and Christianity," in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, ed. Tikva Frymer-Kensky et al. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000), 321-37.
- <sup>4</sup>E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer, trans., *Early Fathers from the Philokalia: Together with Some Writings of St. Abba Dorotheus, St. Isaac of Syria and St. Gregory Palamas; Selected and Translated from the Russian Text Dobrotolubiye* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), 223 (no. 139).
- <sup>5</sup>Cited in Tarif Khalidi, ed., *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 124-25.
- <sup>6</sup>Lawrence of the Resurrection, *The Life of Nicolas Herman*, 104.
- <sup>7</sup>Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1952), 122.
- <sup>8</sup>Traditionally known as the "Collect for Purity" and used in preparation for the Lord's Supper, this is Thomas Cranmer's translation of a medieval Latin prayer. Quoted from *The Booke of the Common Praier and Administration of the Sacramentes, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Churche: After the Use of the Church of Englande* (London: Richard Grafton, 1549) (emphasis added).
- <sup>9</sup>Kabir Helminski, ed., *The Book of Revelations: Selections from the Holy Qur'ān with Interpretations by Muhammad Asad, Yusuf Ali, and Others* (Bristol, England; Watsonville, CA: The Book Foundation, 2005), 3.
- <sup>10</sup>William G. Braude, trans., *The Midrash on Psalms* (2 vols.; Yale Judaica Series 13; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 1:557.
- <sup>11</sup>P. G. Walsh, trans., *Cassiodorus: Explanation of the Psalms*, vol. 3, *Psalms 101-150* (Ancient Christian Writers 53; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, Press 1991), 22.
- <sup>12</sup>A. M. Allchin, ed., *The Heart of Compassion: Daily Readings with St. Isaac of Syria*, trans. Sebastian Brock (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989), 37.
- <sup>13</sup>Adapted from Maxwell Staniforth, trans., *Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers*, rev. Andrew Louth (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 33.
- <sup>14</sup>The *Shemoneh Esreh* or "Eighteen Benedictions" (also known as the *Amidah*) is intended for daily recitation. A core collection of seven benedictions for Sabbaths and

festivals survives in a shorter (Palestinian) and longer (Babylonian) form, the latter cited here from David A. Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish: An Examination of the Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Brown Judaic Studies 65; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 159. Fiensy notes, “There is a consensus among scholars that the content and order—though not the wording—of the Eighteen Benedictions was standardized at least by the Mishnaic period—if not before—probably at the time of Gamaliel II [ca. 90-130 CE]” (129).

<sup>15</sup>*Patrologia graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne (162 vols.; Paris: 1857-1886), 62:212 (my translation).

<sup>16</sup>Kadloubovsky and Palmer, *Early Fathers from the Philokalia*, 185 (no. 14), 206 (no. 85).

<sup>17</sup>The *Testament of Abraham* survives in two versions, the shorter of which is quoted here (cf. Recension A 10:1-15), cited from E. P. Sanders, “Testament of Abraham: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983-1985), 1:887-88, 901 (for discussion of dating and origin, see pp. 874-76). This passage was brought to my attention by Ronit Kaufman.

<sup>18</sup>R. Hugh Connolly, trans., *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version Translated and Accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments, with an Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969 [1929]), 63.

<sup>19</sup>David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher, trans., *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God: al-Maḡṣad al-asmāʾ fī ṣharḥ asmaʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1995) 119.

<sup>20</sup>Both prayers are quoted from *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 189, 210 (with corrections to titles and dates).

<sup>21</sup>This account is from Cleophus J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 57. LaRue gives Sunday, April 3, as the date in question, but in 1862 that date apparently fell on a Thursday, so I have corrected accordingly.

<sup>22</sup>Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish*, 85; cf. A. Robertson and J. Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (10 vols.; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 7:475. Many of the prayers in the *Apostolic Constitutions* are adaptations of Jewish synagogue prayers.

<sup>23</sup>Herbert Danby, trans., *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 455.

<sup>24</sup>Helmski, *The Book of Revelations*, 184.

<sup>25</sup>Burrell and Daher, *Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names*, 99. The customary translation of *Al-Ḥalīm* as “the Forbearing” is perhaps more evocative than Burrell and Daher’s “the Mild.” The quotation in the last line is from the *Qurʾān*, Sura 16:61, which in turn reflects Psalm 130:3.

<sup>26</sup>William R. Schoedel, trans., *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, ed. Helmut Koester (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 71.

<sup>27</sup>Henry Bettenson, trans., *The Early Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of*

*the Fathers from St. Clement of Rome to St. Athanasius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 55.

<sup>28</sup>Robertson and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 8:286.

<sup>29</sup>Cited in Gerald Bray, ed., *James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude* (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 11; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 56.

<sup>30</sup>Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (London: Mowbrays, 1975), 181. Abba Sisoës was a fourth-century Egyptian ascetic and monk.

<sup>31</sup>Quoted from Tertullian, *Disciplinary, Moral, and Ascetical Works*, trans. Rudolph Arbesmann, Emily Joseph Daly, and Edwin A. Quain (Fathers of the Church 40; New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959), 221-22.

<sup>32</sup>Connolly, *Didascalica Apostolorum*, 119, lines 9-15.

<sup>33</sup>Quoted in *The Complete Book of Christian Prayer*, 206.

<sup>34</sup>John Tillotson, *Sermons Preach'd upon Several Occasions: The Second Volume* (London: Edw. Gellibrand, 1678), 57-58.

<sup>35</sup>Quoted from Leonardus Lessius, *The Names of God and Meditative Summaries of the Divine Perfections*, trans. T. J. Campbell (New York: America Press, 1912), 58-59. The Latin title of this work is *Quinquaginta nomina Dei seu divinarum perfectionum compendiaria expositio*; although completed in 1623, it was published posthumously in 1640.

<sup>36</sup>The quotation is from *The Confessions of the Incomparable Doctour S. Augustine, Translated into English*, trans T. Matthew (Saint Omer: English College Press, 1620), 45-46.

<sup>37</sup>Quoted with original spelling from the first edition of George Herbert, *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (Cambridge: Thomas Buck & Roger Daniel, 1633), 173-74. The allusion in line 22 ("Love's a man of warre") is to Exodus 15:3; "scape" in line 25 is an abbreviation for "escape." Herbert explores the paradoxes of sin and salvation, or divine wrath and grace, in many of his poems, among them "Sighs and Groans," "Justice (I)," and "Bitter-Sweet."

<sup>38</sup>Cited in William A. Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam: A Reconsideration of the Sources, with Special Reference to the Divine Saying or Hadith Qudsi* (Religion and Society 7; The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 184.

<sup>39</sup>C. Hubert H. Parry, *Judith; or, The Regeneration of Manasseh: An Oratorio* (London: Novello, 1888), x, 115-18.

<sup>40</sup>C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe: A Story for Children* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1950; repr., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959), 75.

<sup>41</sup>See James L. Kugel, *The Bible as It Was* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1997), 434-35.

<sup>42</sup>Florentino García Martínez, trans, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 47.

<sup>43</sup>Walter C. Hobbs, "Dependence on the Holy Spirit," in *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, ed. Lois Y. Barrett (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 118. Hobbs's observations are based on an analysis of legal usage: "[This] use of 'pray, prayer' *et al.* permeated early English law and is still often seen in pleadings and ju-

dicial opinions both in Canada and in the United States” (personal communication with the author, May 13, 2006).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (14 vols., repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 13:201-2.

<sup>46</sup>Bernard Martin, *Prayer in Judaism* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 114. The prayer is quoted (with minor emendations to the final line) from p. 117; cf. Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish*, 157.

<sup>47</sup>Cited according to the shorter, Palestinian text, from Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish*, 159.

<sup>48</sup>*Patrologia graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne (162 vols.; Paris: 1857-1886), 62:180-82 (my translation). For an alternative translation, see Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series*, 13:182-83.

<sup>49</sup>[www.johnnewton.org/Group/Group.aspx?id=32665](http://www.johnnewton.org/Group/Group.aspx?id=32665).

<sup>50</sup>Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 30.

<sup>51</sup>See Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 431.

<sup>52</sup>“R. Hanina” is likely a Palestinian *Amora* (commentator) of the third century CE.

<sup>53</sup>Cited in Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 137. Cragg comments, “This is the Sufi’s *Alaika tawakkaltu*, ‘Lord in Thee have I trusted’—one of the most familiar phrases in the religious life of all Islam.”

<sup>54</sup>Henry Brown, trans., *Tertullians Apology; or, Defense of the Christians against the Accusations of the Gentiles* (London: Thomas Harper, 1655), 138.

<sup>55</sup>Paula Fredriksen Landes, *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations 23; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 33-34, noting that “Augustine’s exegesis demands strict attention to [the] Latin sequence of tenses” (n. 3).

<sup>56</sup>Jacob Neusner, trans., *Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis; A New American Translation* (3 vols.; Brown Judaic Studies 104; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 1:134.

<sup>57</sup>Cited in Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, trans. David Goldstein (3 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3:1518.

<sup>58</sup>García Martínez, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 354-55.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 305-6 (layout changed). This composition, appended to a manuscript of biblical psalms, was brought to my attention by Graham Ware.

<sup>60</sup>Robertson and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2:602.

<sup>61</sup>Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series*, 10:446.

<sup>62</sup>“To Sabianus” (date unknown); Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, (14 vols., repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 6:291; cf. *Letter 130.8* (Schaff and Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, 6:266).

- <sup>63</sup>John Webster, "The Great Contrast: Romans 5:12-21," in *The Grace of Truth*, ed. Daniel Bush and Brannon Ellis (Farmington Hills, MI: Oil Lamp Books, 2011), 34. This prayer appears in the first English Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549).
- <sup>64</sup>Cited in Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus*, 69, 88.
- <sup>65</sup>Connolly, *Didascalica Apostolorum*, 48, lines 34-36; 50, lines 1-6.
- <sup>66</sup>Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 165-66.
- <sup>67</sup>Thomas Merton, trans., *The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings of the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century* (New York: New Directions, 1960), 76.
- <sup>68</sup>John Trapp, *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Hugh Martin (5 vols.; reprint, London: Richard D. Dickinson, 1867 [1662]), 1:225.
- <sup>69</sup>John Tillotson, *The Remaining Discourses, on the Attributes of God: Viz. His Goodness. His Mercy. His Patience. His Long-suffering. His Power. His Spirituality. His Immensity. His Eternity. His Incomprehensibleness. God the First Cause, and Last End* (London: Ri. Chiswell, 1700), 109.
- <sup>70</sup>Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951 [1904]), 397.
- <sup>71</sup>Josephus, *The Life; Against Apion*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray (Loeb Classical Library 186; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann, 1926).
- <sup>72</sup>J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983-1985), 1:30.
- <sup>73</sup>Bettenson, *Early Christian Fathers*, 56-57. I am grateful to Michael Haykin for bringing this text to my attention.
- <sup>74</sup>Hilda C. Graef, trans., *St. Gregory of Nyssa: The Lord's Prayer; The Beatitudes* (Ancient Christian Writers 18; New York: Newman, 1954), 89.
- <sup>75</sup>Ward, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, 166. Abba Pambo, another Egyptian ascetic, lived around 303-373 CE.
- <sup>76</sup>Burrell and Daher, *Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names*, 149.
- <sup>77</sup>Friedländer, *Guide for the Perplexed*, 75.
- <sup>78</sup>Quoted in R. W. L. Moberly, "How May We Speak of God? A Reconsideration of the Nature of Biblical Theology," *Tyndale Bulletin* 53 (2002): 190n35, from Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus*, trans. W. Jacob (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992), 985 (the German original [unpublished] reads: "Ich gäbe zweihundert Goldgulden, wenn ich beten könnte wie die Jüden. Sie haben es eben von dem gewaltigsten Beter, von ihrem Lehrer Moses gelernt und ihn hat Gott selber unterwiesen!"). Moberly comments, "Jacob does not give the source of the quotation, and I am not able to trace it." However, a similar sentiment appears in Luther's *Table Talk*, from the winter of 1542-1543: "Sie schreien wol sehr und beteten heftig mit großem Ernst und Eifer, wie ihre Betbüchlin anzeigen. Wenn ich also beten könnte, wie sie beten, ich wollte für zwei hundert Fl[orins] Bücher darum geben" (*Werke Tischreden* 5:238, lines 10-12; cf. 5:235, lines 20-21).
- <sup>79</sup>My translation. For an alternative translation, see Schaff and Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, 7:471. For the Greek text, see Paul Gallay, ed., *Gregor von Nazianz: Briefe* (Die Griechischen christlichen Schrift-

steller der ersten Jahrhunderte 53; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1969), 67, lines 10-12.

<sup>80</sup>F. E. Brightman, trans., *The Preces Privatae of Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester* (London: Methuen, 1903), 171. For the Latin text of this prayer, see Lancelot Andrewes, *Preces Privatae Quotidianae Lanceloti Andrewes* (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1853), 291-92.

<sup>81</sup>Jeremy Taylor, *The Golden Grove; or, A Manuall of Daily Prayers and Letanies, Fitted to the Dayes of the Week, Containing a Short Summary of What Is to Be Believed, Practised, Desired* (London: R. Royston, 1654/1655), 134.

<sup>82</sup>Robertson and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 7:472; cf. Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to Be Jewish*, 49.