

**GATEWAY DEVOTIONAL**  
**August 2017**

**GATEWAY DEVOTIONAL**  
**REFLECTIONS OF CHRIST**

**A Daily Devotional and Prayer Journal**



**And we, who with unveiled  
faces all reflect the Lord's glory,  
are being transformed into His likeness with  
ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.  
II Corinthians 3: 18.**

# GATEWAY DEVOTIONAL AND PRAYER JOURNAL

August 2017

*Judges 5: 31—“...may all Your enemies perish, O Lord! **But may they who love You be like the sun when it rises in its full strength.**”*

*Revelation 1: 9-20—“I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,’ and, ‘What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches, which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.’ Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and **His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.** And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.’”*

## **AUGUST 1—Flame**

**READ:** Isaiah 66: 16; Revelation 1: 14; 20: 10; Psalm 104: 4; Matthew 5: 22

### **REFLECT:**

Exodus 3: 2-3—*“And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not burned up.”*

Genesis 19: 24-25—*“Then the Lord rained brimstone and flames of fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of heaven. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”*

Revelation 1: 13-14—*“One like the Son of Man...His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;...”*

Jeremiah 20: 9; 23: 29—*“But His Word was in my heart like a burning fire... ‘Is not My Word like a fire?’”*

While examining the Scripture references to God as a “flame” or “fire”, it occurred to me that every one of them could be put into one of three different categories...that of God’s omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. The first passage speaks to the occasion of God’s presence being made known as He appeared as an angel and spoke from a flaming bush. At other times His presence was made known to the Israelites as He led them at night in a pillar of fire. Exodus 13: 21-22. At Pentecost, His presence as the Holy Spirit appeared as divided tongues of fire upon the heads of believers. Acts 2: 2-4. While these were physical manifestations, God was demonstrating that He is present with them always in the spiritual realm. He is omnipresent.

In the second passage of the text, fire was an example of God’s all-encompassing power or omnipotence being displayed, as He brought His wrath down upon evil men in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. His wrath is depicted as flames of fire in references to hell and eternal damnation, too in Matthew 5: 22 and Revelation 20: 9-10.

While the first two examples of God’s characteristic of omnipresence and omnipotence are actual physical or visual depictions of that particular quality, the third one, or His omniscience, are used metaphorically. In Revelation 1: 14, where John sees Jesus with eyes like burning flames of fire, the piercing intensity of the fire could be an example of His all-knowing, all-seeing omniscience. The Jeremiah passages reference the omniscience of God’s Word, which is like a fire, or two-edged sword, convicting and searching the heart.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are ever-present, all-powerful and all-knowing. I thank You that You are the Flame, the Light of Jesus, that burns so brightly and will never be extinguished! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Jeremiah 15: 14; 20: 9; 23: 29; Hebrews 1: 7, 14; I Corinthians 3: 13.

## AUGUST 2—Lord of Truth

**READ:** Psalm 31: 5; Ephesians 1: 13-14; John 8: 32; 14: 6;16:13

**REFLECT:** As the Lord of Truth, Jesus Christ is the full embodiment of truth—God Incarnate—God in the flesh. Jesus said, “*I am the way, **the truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*” John 14: 6.

What is the truth? The truth is the Word of God—God made manifest in flesh through Jesus Christ—the Gospel of salvation that leads to eternal life, “...*that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He arose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve,*”... I Corinthians 15: 3-5.

Jesus also said, “*And you shall know the **truth** and the **truth** shall set you free.*” John 8: 32. But it is not enough to know **about** the truth. You must actually **know** the truth. You must connect your head knowledge with your heart knowledge. Romans 10: 9-10 says, “*That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*” When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth comes to live within you. If the Spirit dwells within you, He leads you into all wisdom, **truth** and knowledge, and guarantees your redemption. John 14: 15-17; Ephesians 1: 13-14.

In the latter days, God warns us to test the spirits to discern whether others are followers of the Lord of Truth or whether they serve Satan, the Father of lies. John 8: 42-47. The first epistle of the Apostle John establishes several ways to tell whether or not someone belongs to the Lord of Truth. If you: (1)follow God’s commandments, walking in the truth and in the light, as Jesus did; (2) fellowship with, and love, your brothers and sisters in Christ; and (3)believe that Jesus is the Christ, then the truth is within you and you have eternal life. I John 1, 2 and 3.

As long as we are in this world, if we follow the Lord of Truth, He will continue to work through us by the power of the Holy Spirit to sanctify us, making us more and more like Christ. But, we need to continually repent of our sins, asking Him to purify us. “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*” I John 1: 9. So, if you belong to the Lord of Truth, continue to walk in the light, as He is in the light, seeking to know Him more and more. I John 1.

**PRAY:** Today in prayer, consider the following verse from I John 5: 20 and ask God to allow the truth of His Word to penetrate and bring to light everything in your life that needs to change so that your life can be lived to glorify Him as you walk in truth. “*We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true. And we are in Him who is true—even in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.*” In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** I John 1: 5-10; 2: 3-11, 20-25; 3: 11-24; 4: 4-6.

## **AUGUST 3—As Rivers of Water in a Dry Place**

**READ:** Isaiah 32: 2; 44: 3-4; 55: 1; Jeremiah 17: 5-8

**REFLECT:** Imagine how refreshing a river of water would be to someone stranded in a dry land. Just one sip of liquid refreshment would bring about great relief to a person whose mouth is parched. The one drawback to drinking water to quench our thirst, though, is that its effects are not lasting. Eventually, another drink will be required to replace the fluids that are lost. John 4: 13-14.

While the Holy Spirit is often referred to as “*rivers of living water*”, the particular phrase referenced today...“*as rivers of water in a dry place*”... is actually describing what the Holy Spirit does to every Christ-follower, if they allow Him to do His sanctifying work in their life. Just like water refreshes a dehydrated body, Jesus gives life through the power of the Holy Spirit to each Christ-follower as He begins to renew and restore us from the moment of our redemption and onward into our life’s journey. Ephesians 1: 13. The awesome thing about Jesus’ water is that it will cause us to never thirst again. John 4: 14. Before committing our lives to Christ, our souls were parched. We were dry on the inside, and we sought pleasure in things that did not last. Ecclesiastes 1: 2, 7; 2: 10-11. Our souls longed to be filled, but nothing in this world could fill our deepest longings and desires.

However, Jesus promises that if we drink of the living water that only He can give, as opposed to drinking natural water, “*Whoever drinks of this water (natural water) will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.*” John 4: 13(b)-14. Once we allow the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to flow unhindered through us, it will bring life and wholeness to others. We then become vessels of honor fit for the Master’s use. II Timothy 2: 19-21. After God has molded and made us after His will, and not that of our own, He can then use us as drink offerings to pour through into the lives and faith of others. Philippians 2: 13-18.

Does the Holy Spirit pour rivers of living water through you into the lives and faith of others, or are you more like a dry creek bed? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that I have Jesus in me, the hope of all glory, and that I am sealed by the Holy Spirit. Lord, mold me and make me after Your will and then use me to pour Your love and Holy Spirit through into the lives and faith of others around me. May I always yield to Your use and to the ways that You see fit to use me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Revelation 22: 17; Psalm 107: 8-9.

## AUGUST 4—Keeper of Israel

**READ:** Psalm 121: 3-4; Numbers 6: 24; Isaiah 26: 3

**REFLECT:**

*“Now to Him who is able to **keep** you from stumbling  
And to present you faultless  
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,  
To God our Savior, Who alone is wise;  
Be glory and majesty, dominion and power,  
Both now and forever. Amen.”*

Jude 24

The Keeper of Israel is the covenant-keeping God who establishes His promises with His children and never waivers in performing or completing that which He has promised. The security and faithfulness of the Lord is beyond reproach. Once God had set aside the nation of Israel as a holy nation unto Himself, He has never broken the covenants that He has established with them. Despite their disobedience, idolatries and infidelities, He has always saved a remnant unto Himself. And one day soon, He will place the promised Messiah upon the throne of David in the City of Jerusalem to rule and reign over Israel. *“Behold, He who **keeps** Israel shall never slumber nor sleep...He shall preserve your soul...from this time forth, and even forevermore.”* Psalm 121: 4-8.

Just as God is the Keeper of Israel, He is the Keeper of those He has saved through the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Once someone belongs to Christ, it is never possible for them to be lost. Jesus said, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”* John 10: 27-28. In His prayer to His Father shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus also said, *“While I was with them, I protected them and **kept** them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost...”* John 17: 12.

When Paul was in prison shortly before he was to be beheaded, he was assured by his faith that his eternal life was secure. He said, *“... for I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to **keep** what I have committed to Him until that Day.”* II Timothy 1: 12(b). Paul also told the Ephesians that they were sealed by the Holy Spirit from the moment they heard and believed the Gospel, being guaranteed eternal life until the Day of Christ Jesus. Ephesians 1: 13-14. The Apostle Peter also said, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are **kept** by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* I Peter 1: 3-5.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You for the sealing power of the Holy Spirit to keep me and guarantee my redemption until the Day of Christ Jesus. Thank You for keeping me safe and secure in Your love. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

## **AUGUST 5—Light of the Morning**

**READ:** II Samuel 23: 4; Judges 5: 31; Psalm 30: 5

**REFLECT:**

*“And He shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises,  
A morning without clouds,  
Like tender grass springing out of the earth,  
By clear shining after rain.”*  
II Samuel 23: 4

The above passage is a prophetic reference from the last words of David about how the Messiah will come to rule in justice and righteousness. He explains, metaphorically, how His rule will be with newness and freshness, the likes of which have never been seen before. The words of David are a picture of how peaceful and delightful the Millennial Kingdom reign of Christ will be.

Symbolically, it is also a picture of the newness of life we experience when we come under the saving grace of Jesus Christ. A Scriptural reference to this same newness...newness like morning light that we experience when we become a Christ-follower...comes from the last verse of the Song of Deborah, one of the judges of the Old Testament period of Israel. This period of time was during the rule of the judges before they had an earthly king. Judges 5: 31 says, “*So may all of your enemies perish, O Lord! But may they who love you be like the sun when it rises in strength.*” When we are saved, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, rising as the Light of the Morning, or like “*the sun when it rises in strength.*”

Another quality of the Lord that comes to mind when calling Him the Light of the Morning is His faithfulness and reliability. In the hymn by Thomas Chisholm and William Runyan, “*Great is Thy Faithfulness*”, the chorus says, “*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning, new mercies I see.*”

The tender mercies of the Lord are new every morning. Like clockwork, the sun rises and sets each day, without fail. The Lord never changes and His promises are true. Never does He go back on a promise He has made. Just like you know you can depend upon the light of the morning to dawn every day with the sun, you know that the Lord will never leave you nor forsake you. “*Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions they fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness.*” Lamentations 3: 22-23.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You brought Jesus to dawn within my heart and will be the Light of the Morning for me unto my eternal salvation. May His light always shine brightly from my own life into the lives of others around me...those who are walking in darkness and who need to see Him and know Him. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Isaiah 58: 8-11; Lamentations 3: 22-23.

## **AUGUST 6—Shadow of A Mighty Rock in a Weary Land**

**READ:** Isaiah 32: 2; 49: 2; 51: 16; John 17: 11

**REFLECT:** A shadow is created when something bigger than the object that is being shadowed comes between that object and the direct rays of light, diverting the penetrating light beams in another direction. The Shadow of A Mighty Rock in a Weary Land is a metaphor for the divine providence, care and protection that God provides for us through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. His amazing love overshadows us and protects us from sin. Because He is bigger and more powerful than we are, He can step in between us and the penetrating, burning rays of sin that seek to destroy us, providing a covering or shadow in which we can hide. The shadow makes an area of shade that provides some respite from the heat and brightness of evil that withers our resolve and blinds us spiritually.

Isaiah 51: 16 says, *“I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand . . .”* This verse presents a beautiful picture of the greatness and majesty of God. It creates an image of His powerful hand reaching down from Heaven to completely cover us, protecting us from our enemies. Back in the 90’s, a movie became popular that was called, *“Honey, I Shrunk the Kids”*. In this movie, the father shrunk the children to a size where they were no bigger than ants. The parents could literally put the kids in the palm of their hands.

That’s how it is with God. He can pick us up and hold us in the palm of His hand, or safely shelter us in the shadow of His hand or wings. God can even hide us and keep us safe from all harm through the power of His name. Jesus said, *“I will remain in the world no longer, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those You have given Me—the name You gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.”* John 17: 11.

So, when you grow weary and feel like the world is crashing down around you, run into the Shadow of A Mighty Rock that is Jesus Christ, the name above all names. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Acts 2: 21. The most incredible shadow that was ever cast was the Shadow of the Cross of Christ.

**PRAY:** Meditate upon this thought through the words to an old hymn, *“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”* by Elizabeth C. Clephane and Frederick C. Maker, and then formulate a prayer, thanking God that He protects and overshadows you.

*“Beneath the cross of Jesus, I fain would take my stand,  
The shadow of a mighty rock, within a weary land;  
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,  
From the burning of the noon-tide heat, and the burden of the day.”*  
In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 17: 8; 57: 1; 63: 7; 91: 1-4; 121: 5-8.

## **AUGUST 7—Spiritual Rock**

**READ:** I Corinthians 10: 1-4, 5-13; Numbers 20: 2-13; Exodus 17: 1-7

**REFLECT:** When Jesus is referred to as the Spiritual Rock, it is in reference to Him being the source of living water or life. When one drinks the living waters that flow from Him as the Spiritual Rock, they will never thirst again. I Corinthians 10: 3-4; John 7: 37-39.

On two separate occasions while the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness and were grumbling about being thirsty, Moses struck a rock and water miraculously flowed forth from the rock, both at Mt. Sinai and at Kadesh Barnea. While it seems oxymoronic that life-giving waters would flow from a rock, these occasions were but a foreshadowing of how the life-giving water of the Holy Spirit would flow forth from Christ, our Spiritual Rock, after He had been smitten, struck, and then hung on a cross to die.

You have probably heard people say, about the likelihood of something impossible happening, “It would be easier to get blood from a turnip,” or, “That’s like making silk purses out of sow’s ears!” But, the fact is that after Christ died on a cross and all the life-blood had drained from Him, He rose again, ascended into Heaven and sent the life-giving water of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers. The power to sustain life for eternity would flow from a Spiritual Rock, that Rock being Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 10: 4. While in Israel years ago, I saw something that symbolized this same spiritual truth to me. From the base of Mt. Hermon, the highest point in Israel, flow three natural springs. Most streams that originate from a mountain begin with runoff from the top of the mountain as the snow melts. However, these springs just came forth from the bedrock at the base or foot of the mountain. They were not coming from underground caves, or from well openings. They appeared to be just gushing out of the solid rock. These three springs soon flowed together to form the first part of the Jordan River, the same river in which Jesus was baptized. To me, this was representative of the Trinity and the life-giving power of the three persons of the Triune Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In the Millennial Kingdom to come at Jesus’ Second Coming, living water will flow from the base of the altar in the Temple where Jesus sits on the throne of David. This living water will flow east through the Kidron Valley and the Mt. of Olives to the Dead Sea, where the waters will suddenly team with life. A body of water that is currently unable to sustain any form of life whatsoever, will suddenly “come alive”! In much the same way, anyone who is spiritually dead in their sins, can come to the Spiritual Rock which is Jesus Christ. There they can be forgiven of their sins and washed clean. At the point of salvation, when the Holy Spirit comes to live within them, out of their hearts will flow rivers of living water. Hallelujah, what a Savior! John 7: 38.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You for Jesus, the Spiritual Rock—the Rock of my salvation. I thank You that He provides the life-giving water of the Holy Spirit that nourishes me spiritually so that I will never thirst again if I continue to come and drink from, and of, Him. In His precious name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 78: 15-42; Revelation 2: 17; Ezekiel 47: 1-12.

## AUGUST 8—Chosen of God

**READ:** Isaiah 41: 8-10; 42: 1-6; 49: 1-7; Matthew 20: 16

**REFLECT:** God foreordained, even before the foundations of the world, before Adam and Eve sinned, that He would establish and carry out His wonderful plan of redemption through Jesus Christ, His Chosen One. When the Temple rulers mocked Jesus while He hung on the Cross, little did they know that His total and complete submission to the will of His Father was being obediently carried out, in order to perfectly fulfill prophecies that they had been studying in God's Word for hundreds of years. When they shouted, "*He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.*" Luke 23: 35. He was, in fact, the Chosen of God, and He was offering salvation to the world...salvation from the condemnation of their sins. John 3: 16; Romans 3: 23; 6: 23. When Jesus said, "*...the last will be first and the first last...For many are called, but few are chosen,*" He was proclaiming the truth of the fact that there are many who will harden their hearts and reject Jesus Christ. Matthew 20: 16. Because God knows who will receive Christ and who will reject Him, He proclaimed to Moses, "*I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.*" Romans 9: 15; Exodus 33: 19(b). For God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. I Corinthians 1: 26-31.

God is a covenant-keeping God and those He establishes and covenants with, those He chooses, He never forsakes. Because God is sovereign, holy and the One True God, history is truly "His Story". Deuteronomy 7: 6-11 is a wonderful statement of how He chose and set apart Israel to reveal Himself to, and show His glory through—the nation through which He would choose to be a light to even the Gentiles. "*For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.*" And to any nation who would choose Him, He has said, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.*" Psalm 33: 12.

How incredible, though, are the promises He has made to those He has chosen to show His salvation to. In I Peter 2: 9-10, these promises are written to the Body of Christ, the Church, the Bride of Jesus, "*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*" These are pretty big shoes to fill. To him who has been given much, much more is expected. Because God has offered us these incredible gifts, because *He has chosen us*, we ought to be living holy and sanctified lives, made perfect through repentance and the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. I John 1: 9; Luke 12: 28(b).

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You have chosen me through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, and that Your promises to me because of His finished and accomplished work at the Cross are everlasting because He was first Chosen of God, by You, to complete Your perfect work of redemption and salvation through me. I praise You Lord! In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Deuteronomy 7: 6-11; Romans 8: 28-39; Luke 23:32-43.

## AUGUST 9—The Sun

**READ:** Psalm 84: 11; Isaiah 60: 19-20; Malachi 4: 2

**REFLECT:** We live in a world that is darkened by the values of our culture. Values that glorify self-centeredness and immorality are prevalent in today's society. However, by studying God's Word and examining the life of Christ, God our Sun will enlighten us regarding eternal values. The more we know Him and desire to follow Him, the more the Sun will transform us into the likeness of Christ, changing our hearts to value what He values. II Corinthians 5: 17.

The physical sun serves to guide and direct us as we conduct and live out our lives while here on earth. It physically illuminates our path. Likewise, our Sun, Jesus Christ, helps us to find our way along the path of life, illuminating our spiritual lives by the Holy Spirit. Psalm 119: 105. One day, after the tribulation and Jesus' Millennial Kingdom reign, God will create a New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem. At that time, Satan and his minions will be thrown into hell for all of eternity and God's people will live with Him forever and ever. From that time on into all of eternity, God's Word tells us about the glory of the New Jerusalem...that in it, there will be no more need of the physical sun because, *"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there)."* Revelation 21: 22-25. Can you even imagine how glorious that will be?!

Also, similarly to how the sun gives life to living creatures and plants on earth, Jesus The Sun sustains and gives us life. Not only did He make us and give us life at our birth, but He also gives us a reason for living. He gives us a purpose. As Christ-followers, we are all given a mission field. Jesus stated His purpose in John 4: 34: *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work."* Seek God about how this applies to your life situation. What mission field has God given you? John 4: 34-38. What purpose and works of service has He specifically designed you to do so that the light of the Sun, the light of Christ, will be seen more brightly as it shines through you into a dark and dying world? Ephesians 2: 10; Matthew 5: 14-16.

**PRAY:** Personally write a prayer today asking God what mission field or works of service He has prepared for you to do to complete His divine will and plan for you as it fits within His Kingdom purposes; and, ask Him to clearly illuminate the path that He has set before you. Then be willing to make your life's mission to submit to the *"working out"* of your salvation and God's will in your life so that the Sun, who is Jesus Christ, can shine forth from, and through, your life into the lives and faith of others. Pray in Jesus' name. Philippians 2: 12.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Revelation 21: 22-25.

## **AUGUST 10—Word of Life**

**READ:** John 1: 1-4, 14; I John 1: 1-3

**REFLECT:** God is referred to as “*the Word*” because He is perfectly revealed in His Word. Not only is God revealed in His Word, but He was also made manifest in Jesus Christ, His Son, who took on human flesh and dwelled among us. John 1: 1-3, 14.

The Apostle John and other eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life on earth heard, touched and saw Jesus in person. Therefore, John can reliably say that the Word of life appeared to him and to others on earth. I John 1: 1-3. What John writes is true. Jesus came to this earth, considering His deity to be nothing, not just as another good man or as a prophet, but as the One and Only True God-Man. Philippians 2: 7. He was not only the Son of God but the Son of Man.

God is the eternal Word of life. He always has been and always will be. He was not created nor will He ever cease to exist. He is life and He created life. Genesis 2: 7; Psalm 139: 13-16.

Moreover, the Word of life speaks truth into our lives. The Word says that we are valuable in God’s eyes. Psalm 139: 13-17; Matthew 10: 29-31. The Word says that we are saved by the grace of God and not by anything that we do. Ephesians 2: 8-9. Another truth that we find in the Word is that God has a beautiful plan for each one of our lives, a plan that starts with us surrendering everything to Him and trusting in Him. Jeremiah 29: 11; Proverbs 19: 21.

Most importantly, Jesus is the Word of life in the sense that those who put their faith and trust in Him, as their Lord and Savior will experience and inherit eternal life with Him in Heaven forever and ever. John 3: 16; 6: 51; 10: 10; 14: 6; Romans 5: 6-11. Do you know the Word of Life that is Jesus Christ so that you will live with Him forever? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Your Word is what gives me life. I thank You that Jesus is the Word that became flesh and dwelled among us so that I could have eternal life with You if I would but confess of my sins, receive Your forgiveness and ask Him to be my Lord and Savior. I thank You that Your Word is truth...that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, and that there is no other way to be reconciled to You but through Him. I praise You and pray in Jesus’ precious name. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Philippians 2: 12-16; John 6: 68-69; I John 2: 4; 5: 1-13.

## **AUGUST 11—Maker of All Things**

**READ:** Jeremiah 51: 19; Genesis 1: 1-31; Colossians 1: 16-17

**REFLECT:** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1: 1. The story continues in His Word and we read about God creating light and darkness; the sky, land, and seas; plants and vegetation; the sun, moon, and stars; creatures of the land, sky and sea; and mankind.

Others will try to convince you otherwise. For example, Stanley Miller, the father of prebiotic chemistry insists that all life stemmed from a primordial Earth containing only amino acids. He says this because amino acids are the building blocks for proteins and are used by all creatures. However, Miller's efforts are nullified by the fact that we are composed of not only amino acids, but carbohydrates and fatty acids as well. Any student of biochemistry can tell you that the chemical structures of amino acids, carbohydrates and fatty acids differ and, therefore, starting with only a pool of amino acids does not explain how complex creatures were formed.

Charles Darwin also attempted to explain our existence through the theory of evolution, and some people subscribe to the Big Bang Theory—that there was a big explosion and all of creation came into being. However, there are so many holes in all of these theories that leave so many questions unanswered.

How then do we explain our existence? By going to God's Word, of course. God's Word is truth. John 14: 6; 17: 17; Colossians 1: 3-6. Creation, as described by God through Moses in the Book of Genesis is not simply another theory. We are not just random people who stemmed from a pool of amino acids. We are the intentional design of our Creator God. Psalm 139:13-16. We were created by Him and for Him. Colossians 1: 16-17. We are created with a purpose, and our lives have meaning because of our Creator, our Maker. Do you have any theory of creation? Does it line up with God's Word? If your theory does not line up with the Word of God, you might want to talk with one of the pastors or staff. Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are my Maker. I thank You that You knew me before You even created the foundations of the earth and that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I thank You that You have a divine design and purpose for my life and that it fits precisely within Your Kingdom purposes. I ask You to reveal that plan and purpose to me more clearly every day as I continue on my journey through life with You, my Maker, my Creator. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 89: 11; 102: 25; Isaiah 42: 5; 48: 12-13; John 1: 1-3.

## AUGUST 12—Merciful

**READ:** Psalm 103: 8 (NKJV); 117: 1-2; Joel 2: 13; Jonah 4: 2

**REFLECT:** To be “*merciful*” is to “*give relief from suffering, to have pity on*”, or “*offer forgiveness towards, an enemy or offender who is under one’s power*”.

Psalm 103: 8 says:

*“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.*

*He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.*

*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.”*

Both the definition and the verse of Psalm 103 referenced above, support the statement I have often heard concerning the Lord’s mercy—that statement being that “*grace*” is receiving something we don’t deserve, and “*mercy*” is **not** receiving something we do deserve, i.e. punishment and condemnation.

Concerning the Lord, our sin demands that we experience a spiritual death, which leads to eternal condemnation and separation from God forever. But because the Lord is both “*merciful and gracious*”, He forgives our sin and graciously gifts us with salvation, which we don’t deserve. Accompanied with His grace, He extends to us mercy, and doesn’t punish us with eternal separation from Him, which is what we do deserve. As the Psalm passage says, “*He has not dealt with us according to our sin, (n)or punished us according to our iniquities.*”

Something that we need to be ever mindful of, though, is that we should never take the Lord’s mercy for granted. Jonah mentioned that he was disobedient and fled to Tarshish because he knew that the Lord was “*a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm,...*”. However, God is also just and righteous, and even though we might be saved, we still have to face the consequences of our sin, while we are yet here on this earth.

Also, we need to remember that, when we are seeking the Lord’s mercy, He knows the motives of our hearts. We cannot fool the Lord. If we are just trying to avoid the consequences of our disobedience, and are not really remorseful or repentant, God knows that. I Samuel 16: 7; Luke 18: 9-14; Psalm 139: 1-4. God will exalt the humble and bring down the proud and boastful.

I don’t know about you, but I find great comfort in knowing that my Merciful God knows me so well that He can be patient and slow to anger while waiting on me to realize my sin and figure out my own motives. Then I can truly come to Him with a repentant heart, crying out, “*God, have mercy on me, a sinner!*” Luke 18: 13.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are merciful and that Your mercies are new every morning. I thank You that You are slow to anger and are so patient with, not only me, but all of mankind, because Your desire is that all would come to salvation in Jesus Christ and none would be lost. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen. II Peter 3: 9.

## AUGUST 13—Wall of Fire

**READ:** Zechariah 2: 1-5; Psalm 125: 1-5

**REFLECT:** Instead of having walls made out of brick and mortar, Zechariah 2: 4-5 says New Jerusalem's walls will be made of God Himself: *“Run, speak to this young man, saying: ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. For I,’ says the Lord, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’”* Manmade walls are prone to destruction. They can be torn down, scaled, burned, exploded and otherwise ruined. They do not provide 100% safety from invasion. Only when God is our Wall will we have guaranteed security from our enemies.

Sometimes, we put too much faith in the walls that we construct by ourselves. We look to things for protection that are only going to fail us. We trust in things that only provide a temporary defense or that can be easily destroyed. We may trust in money, prestige, or possession. Or, we may put our confidence in friends, spouses, children, or our pastor instead of in Almighty God. We may trust in the “security” of our comfort zones or safe places, which will only prevent us from experiencing all that God has planned for our lives and our relationship with Him.

Another topic that Zechariah 2: 1-5 speaks on is the growth of Jerusalem. Whereas physical walls would limit growth, with God as our Wall, growth is immeasurable. There are no boundaries to, or limits to, what He can accomplish. As in the early church when God *“added to their number daily those who were being saved”*, He wants the same to happen with every church, or local Body of Christ-followers that He has established. Acts 2: 47. He desires to be our Wall of Fire. What do you run into, in order to be safe? Do you seek protection and security from physical things and/or people, or do you run to the Lord your God as a Wall of Fire to protect you? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are mighty to save and that You are my Wall of Fire. I ask You to help me to tear down any walls of false security that I have put in place that are merely physical things or other people. Help me to seek You alone for my safety and security. Help me also, Lord, to not put boundaries up to prevent You from doing all that You desire to do in my life. Your Word promises that You will establish my boundaries in spacious places if I but trust in You. Psalm 16: 5-6; 18: 17-19. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Isaiah 4: 2-6; 26: 1-3; Matthew 7: 24-28.

## **AUGUST 14—Longsuffering**

**READ:** Numbers 14: 18; Galatians 5: 22-23

**REFLECT:** While longsuffering is usually equated with patience, it is more about “being” patient. “Being” longsuffering is not only waiting for something to happen or not happen, but it is *“bearing problems or annoying behavior with patience.”* The Lord is longsuffering or patient, merciful and gracious to all of His creation, *“...for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”* Matthew 5: 45. But, He is also *“longsuffering”* because He would have every right to bring His wrath down immediately upon each man the first time he sins, but for His glory, He chooses not to do so.

Despite the multitude of blessings and miracles that the Lord poured out upon the nation of Israel, they continued to be an adulterous and idolatrous people, causing the curse and punishment of their sin to fall upon their children to the third and fourth generations. Exodus 34: 6-7. But, the *“longsuffering”* of the Lord caused Him to *“stay”* His hand of vengeance and judgment against them.

The great love that God has for us, His creation, allows us to see glimpses of His glory through His longsuffering—a patience that leads to Him lavishing His mercy and grace out upon us. II Peter 3: 9 says, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* Once we are saved, we should consider that the Lord continues to be patient in withholding His wrath and punishment because He desires that more of us would come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Therefore, we should be obedient in allowing Him to sanctify us so that we can become vessels that He can use to send out the Gospel message. II Peter 3: 14-18.

We should never forget that because the Lord has been longsuffering in not bringing His wrath down upon Israel, it is through them that He has brought salvation to us through Jesus. Romans 9: 22-24 says, *“What if God, choosing to show His wrath and make His power known, bore with great patience the objects of His wrath—prepared for destruction? What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory—even us, whom He also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?”* Thank heaven this is not rhetorical, and He, in fact, did this! Because He did reach out and save us, with great longsuffering, we should be on the frontline to speak the truth of Jesus Christ to the remnant that He has saved unto Himself, to His glory!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You were longsuffering and so patient with me to come to salvation in Jesus Christ and that You did not destroy me with Your wrath as I so deserved. Thank You that because of Your longsuffering toward me, I have inherited eternal life through Christ Jesus. Help me to bring the Gospel message to the lost around me and to use Your example of being longsuffering and patient with them in the process. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Romans 2: 1-16; 9: 22-26; Psalm 86: 11-17; Exodus 34: 6-7.

## **AUGUST 15—Our Shade**

**READ:** Psalm 121: 5-8; Hosea 14: 7

**REFLECT:** “*Shade*” can be defined as “*coolness caused by the shelter from direct sunlight*”. A covering or shelter that provides protection from the penetrating, relentless rays of direct sunlight beating down upon the earth is often necessary to sustain life in certain regions of the world. Such is the case in the hot, arid wastelands of the Judean desert and wilderness. People living or traveling in these areas, especially during the time of Christ, understood the need to be prepared with some type of covering or protection from the sun’s rays and enough water to prevent dehydration. The conditions created by the oppressive heat and sun could present circumstances that could be life-threatening. People who entered these areas unprepared often became delusional and saw things that weren’t real, such as mirages.

Metaphorically, the same is true of life. The oppressive, relentless heat of life caused by sin *is* life-threatening and can lead to our death unless we seek a reprieve in the shelter of forgiveness from our sin that comes from Our Shade who is Jesus Christ.

Before we are saved, the penetrating rays of guilt, shame, fear, emptiness and loneliness beat down upon us. Without the refreshing that comes from the living waters of God’s Word through the Holy Spirit, we become dehydrated and will die in our sin, forever separated from the care and protection provided by God. Believing the “*father of lies*”, we envision things that aren’t real and often become delusional in our thinking.

Even after we are saved, we often “stay out in the sun too long” or in the midst of evil, not seeking Our Shade from time-to-time. Without the sunscreen of His Word, we can get a bad sunburn from the burning rays of sin that requires the healing power of the Balm of Gilead. We, too, can become spiritually dehydrated, dry and parched when we don’t continually drink from the living waters of His Word and seek shelter in His Shade.

In Mark 4: 30-32, Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is “*...like a mustard seed, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on the earth; but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all the herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade.*” So, remember that the battle of life is the Lord’s and He has already won the victory in Jesus Christ. So, relax, drink from His Word and seek the shelter, protection and care that His Shade provides from the heat of this world. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, resting in His Shade, and He will add all other things to you that you have need of. Matthew 6: 33.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You provide Shade to me from the scorching heat of the sin and pain of this world. Most importantly, I thank You that Jesus protects me from the burning heat of the fires of hell in eternity to come. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Psalm 91: 1-2; Mark 4: 30-32.

## **AUGUST 16—One Who Dies Leaving A Will**

**READ:** Hebrews 9: 16-28; 6: 12-20; 10: 16-18; Leviticus 8: 14-15

**REFLECT:** When sin entered the world through Adam and Eve, death also entered the picture—not only physical death—but more importantly, spiritual death and eternal separation from God. Because God is a holy God and cannot be in the presence of sin, sin had to be done away with in order for man’s relationship with God to be restored. Since the payment for sin is death, and life is in the blood of every living creature, the shed blood of an innocent creature was required to pay the penalty owed for the debt of sin. This death symbolized the dying to self and repentance required for the forgiveness of sin, in submission to the perfect will of God.

After Adam and Eve had sinned, they felt shameful in being naked. Genesis 3: 21. In order to cover their sin, God required the sacrifice of an innocent animal’s life to provide the skins to clothe them. Covering their sin allowed God to be able to look upon them once again, and their relationship with Him could then be restored. Later, through the Mosaic Covenant, God would establish a body of laws applying to animal sacrifice that had to be complied with in order for the sins of the Israelites to be covered so that they could come into His presence.

However, the Law only served to prove that it was impossible for sinful man to ever perfectly obey the Law, in order to be forgiven of his sins and inherit eternal life. A more perfect way to inherit salvation was required. Psalm 51: 16-17 says, *“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”*

That perfect way would be the sacrifice of God’s Only Begotten Son. The blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, the life of the only One ever perfect and without sin, would not only be able to cover and forgive sin, but it would completely remove any vestiges of sin. Hebrews 10: 15-18. By coming to God with a repentant and contrite heart and accepting the sacrifice of His Son, sinful man could become a co-heir with Christ, inheriting eternal life. Romans 8: 16-17.

So amazing, however, is the fact that the law always requires that there be someone deceased in order for there to be an inheritance. There has to be *“one who dies leaving a will”*. But the exception is the will left by Jesus Christ. Hebrew 9: 16. Through Him, we inherit eternal life through *“One Who (Lives) Leaving a Will”*! Although He died and shed His blood to pay the penalty owed for our sin, He arose from the dead and now lives forevermore and is seated at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven, waiting for those who He died to save. II Peter 1: 10-11. Oh what a Savior! Because He lives, we can face tomorrow!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that I am a co-heir with Jesus Christ Your Son because His blood was shed for me. More importantly, I thank You that because He lives and is seated at Your right hand, where He has also seated me in the spiritual realm, I will live with You forever, cleansed from my sin by His precious blood. Thank You Lord that I am Your child forever. Thank You for my inheritance in Christ. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Exodus 24: 1-8; 29: 1-21; Ephesians 1: 3-23; Romans 8: 16-17.

## AUGUST 17—The Name

**READ:** Philippians 2: 9; Proverbs 22: 1; John 17: 6, 12; Acts 2: 21; 4: 12

**REFLECT:** Proverbs 22: 1 says, “A **good name** is to be chosen rather than riches,” and God told David, when He made a covenant with him, “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for **My name**, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” II Samuel 7: 13-17.

God would, indeed, have David’s son, Solomon, build the house that would be for God’s name, and He would establish David’s throne and kingdom forever. Upon that throne will eventually sit the King of Kings, the Son of God, who has God’s name, “**the**” **good name** that “is to be chosen rather than riches,” the “**name of Jesus Christ**”. Revelation 19 speaks of Jesus Christ, the One who will come to rule and reign upon David’s throne, and what it will be like when He comes, saying, “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a **name** written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and **His name** is called **The Word of God**.” Revelation 19: 11-13.

So, when we want to find out about the “**good name**” that is “to be chosen rather than riches,” we need to go to the Word of God, which says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and has given Him **the name which is above every name**, that at **the name of Jesus** every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**.” Philippians 2: 5-11.

That just about says it all, but the Word of God says a little bit more that cannot be left out:

Acts 2: 21; Romans 10: 13—

“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the **name of the Lord** will be saved.”

Acts 4: 12—

“...that by the **name of Jesus Christ** of Nazareth, ...Nor is salvation in any other for there is no **other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Now, there we have said it all!!! To God be the glory through the **name of Jesus Christ!**

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that in the **name above all names, the name of Jesus Christ**, I have been saved unto eternal life. Glory to You, God, forever and ever. In **Jesus’ name** I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Exodus 20: 7; Matthew 6: 9; 18: 20; Revelation 15: 4; 19: 13.

## **AUGUST 18—He Who is Able to Do Immeasurably More Than All We Ask or Imagine**

**READ:** Ephesians 3: 14-21; I Corinthians 1: 25; I John 4: 4; Jeremiah 29: 11

**REFLECT:** Immeasurable: “*impossible to measure*”. This is the only way that we can humanly express the nature of God. He is so vast and awesome that our human minds cannot comprehend how great His love is and all that He is able to do in our lives.

Charles Spurgeon wrote about the phrase “*exceedingly abundantly*”: “*He has constructed here in the Greek an expression which is altogether his own. No language was powerful enough for the apostle,—I mean for the Holy Ghost speaking through the apostle,—for very often Paul has to coin words and phrases to shadow forth his meaning, and here is one, ‘He is able to do exceeding abundantly’, so abundantly that it exceeds measure and description.*”

Oftentimes, we limit what God can do in our lives. We may not do this intentionally because it is hard for our finite minds to grasp how vast is God’s love and power. Think of any situation in your life where you want to see God move. It could be a career change, an unsaved friend, a marriage restoration, an event you are planning, or another significant life change. In your mind, you probably have expectations of how things will go, or should go. But, do not stop with those thoughts. Think beyond your expectations. Think way beyond your imagination. Think of a big God who has big plans for your life and big dreams He has given you for what He wants to do through you. Jeremiah 29: 11.

God never calls us to do anything that He will not equip us to do. Never limit the power of Almighty God living inside of you. Whenever you feel weak and inadequate, remember that the Lord God is with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Deuteronomy 31: 6.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You have plans for me for hope and for a future to prosper me in all my ways. Help me, Lord, to imagine what You are able to do beyond my finite thinking. Help me to trust You and to pray big prayers. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Philippians 4: 13, 19; Ephesians 1: 15-23; II Chronicles 32: 7-8; Psalm 147: 5; Isaiah 41: 10.

## AUGUST 19—Surety

**READ:** Hebrews 7: 2-22; Philemon 1: 17-21; Ephesians 1: 3-14

**REFLECT:** A surety is a person who accepts responsibility for another person who fails to pay a debt, appear in court, or perform on a contract. The surety stands as a guarantee in case the original person's promises cannot be fulfilled. Because of the pledge made by the surety, the person to whom the promise is made can have confidence and trust in a future performance. Jesus Christ stands as "the" Surety for the debt owed for the sins of the world. Before He came to "stand in your stead" and be your Surety, the payment that you owed for the debt of your sins was death and eternal separation from God forever. However, if you have accepted the free gift of eternal life that God offers to you, Jesus stands in your place and has paid your debt in full, securing your future. Having given His life for yours, you can be restored to a "right" relationship with God and be guaranteed eternal life in Heaven.

In the Old Testament, Judah stood as a surety when he offered to take the place of his younger brother Benjamin and stay behind in Egypt as a servant to Joseph, guaranteeing that Benjamin would return from Canaan, or Judah would be Joseph's slave forever. Genesis 43: 8-9; 44: 16-34. In Philemon 2: 17-18, Paul offers to stand as a surety for Onesimus the slave and pay for any debts or obligations he might have owed to Philemon. Both of these are a type of Christ, or shadowing of Jesus as a Surety for Christ-followers to pay for the debt owed for their sins.

But Jesus, as Surety with an "oath" from God, stands as a guarantee of a better covenant than the old covenant under the law. Hebrews 7: 22. The immutability of God's nature and His promise by "oath", secure our salvation for all eternity, if you are a Christ-follower. God never changes and because He is the embodiment of truth, He cannot lie. Therefore, when God makes an oath, there is no higher or better guarantee. What God has promised, He is able to perform. Romans 4:21. Plus, Jesus came not only with words, but in His own person. Jesus said, "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*" John 14: 9; 1: 1-3, 14. The Word became flesh and dwelled among us.

Because of the oath, Jesus stands as Surety *with God* for us, and because of the seal placed in us from the moment we believe by the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing our salvation, He stands as Surety *with us* for God. Ephesians 1: 13-14. It's like having double indemnity! As Andrew Murray wrote in *Two Covenants*, with Jesus as our Surety, we have the assurance (1) of God's love, (2) the guarantee of the sufficiency of Christ's finished redemption through the Holy Spirit, and (3) a confident trust we can rely on, that what is needed on our part to enter into eternal life has been made complete! Can you claim that blessed assurance with Jesus as your Surety!

**PRAY:** As a prayer of praise and thanksgiving today, pray the first verse of the old hymn "*Blessed Assurance*" by Fanny J. Crosby to the Lord.

*"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine!*

*Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood!"*

Thank You Jesus for being my Surety! In your precious name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Romans 4: 21; II Corinthians 1: 21-22; 5: 5; Hebrews 8: 6-13.

## **AUGUST 20—Portion of Jacob**

**READ:** Jeremiah 10: 11-16; 51: 15-19; Romans 8: 16-17; Numbers 18: 12, 20, 24

**REFLECT:** The original reference to the Portion of Jacob was an Old Testament title for the provision that God established for the tribe of Levi, or the priests. When God set aside the Levites to serve in the tabernacle and temple as priests, they were not included in the land distribution of the Promised Land among the tribes of Israel, nor were they allowed to engage in any occupation whereby they would receive financial gain. Their support was solely to come from the firstfruit offerings that the children of Israel were commanded to give unto the Lord. After the Levites then offered a tenth of the firstfruits to the Lord, they were allowed to keep the remainder—the Portion of Jacob. Jeremiah 10: 16; Numbers 18: 12, 20, 24.

By worldly standards, the Levites were left without an inheritance. But, in the eyes of the Lord, no better inheritance could have been had. God considered the *position* of priesthood to be a gift from Him. It was a most holy honor to be able to come into the Lord's presence to serve Him. In essence, because the priests were receiving nine-tenths of the firstfruit offerings, they were receiving the "best of the best" of everything that was offered to the Lord. God was establishing His inheritance in covenant love with them.

Through the blood of Jesus, Christians have been made co-heirs with Christ. Romans 8: 17. Through the covenant of His blood, if you belong to Him, you don't receive just a "portion" of what is His, but everything that He has is also yours. Anyone who has made Him their Lord and Savior has also been made by God through Jesus' blood, to be a "*king(s) and priest(s)*" in His Kingdom, with a citizenship established in Heaven. Philippians 3: 20.

As a Christ-follower, your Portion of Jacob includes not only the priesthood, but "the" Firstfruits, which is Jesus Christ. He becomes yours and lives within your heart through the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8: 23; I Corinthians 15: 20, 23. But, most importantly, the greatest "portion" of the inheritance that comes from knowing Jesus Christ is eternal life. "*You have made known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.*" Psalm 16: 11. What greater inheritance could there be than the Portion of Jacob that belongs to those who are co-heirs with Jesus Christ? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Pray Psalm 16: 5-6 in thanksgiving today: Thank You Lord, "*You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.*" Thank You for Your rich blessings that are mine in Christ. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Deuteronomy 10: 9; Joshua 13: 14; Philippians 4: 19.

## **AUGUST 21—Horn of Salvation**

**READ:** Luke 1: 68-69; Psalm 18: 1-3

**REFLECT:** In the Old Testament, salvation often referred to preservation or deliverance from evil, destruction or difficulty. Salvation was frequently understood in relation to liberation from military enemies. Also, Old Testament reference to “clinging to the horns of the altar” was an ancient custom whereby one who was afraid and feared they were going to be executed by the king’s declaration would run into the temple and cling to the horns of the altar, basically and symbolically, begging for mercy and their life to be spared. On two different occasions in I Kings 1 and 2, both Adonijah and Joab fled to the temple and clung to the horns of the altar because they feared that King Solomon was going to have them killed. I Kings 1 49-51; 2: 28-29. In I Kings 1: 51, it says, “*And it was told Solomon, saying, ‘Indeed, Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’*” Taking hold of the horns of the altar symbolized that they were taking hold of God.

However, Luke 1: 77 clearly defines the New Testament understanding of salvation as being redemption and deliverance from the penalty of sin. Luke 1: 68-79. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, we have been saved from our enemy Satan, who seeks only to kill, steal and destroy. John 10: 10. By the grace of God, Jesus becomes our Horn of Salvation and we are no longer slaves to sin, nor do we have to fear death. Romans 6: 23.

Interestingly, the word “horn” in Luke 1: 69 does not refer to an instrument as many might assume. Rather, think of animals that have horns such as rhinos or antelopes. These horns are often used by the animals as weapons and are a symbol of their strength. Revelation 12: 3 notes that Satan has ten horns. Satan uses his horns to attack us, to weaken us, and to cause us to sin. He prods us on with his horns. Praise God, though, that He has given us a Horn that can crush the horns of Satan! Jesus is our Horn of Salvation, and when we put our trust and faith in Him, we can overcome Satan’s attempts to weaken us spiritually. First John 4: 4 reminds us that we serve a mighty God. With Him on our side, we can overcome the attacks of the enemy. We no longer have to live in sin or believe Satan’s lies. Trust in Jesus, cling to Him...He is the Horn of your Salvation. As you cling to only Him, then you will walk in victory over the enemy. When you are afraid, do you feel that you can cling to Jesus and that there is safety and protection from the wiles of the enemy in Him? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that salvation is in You and You alone. I thank You that Jesus has become the Horn of Salvation for me as a Christ-follower and that I can cling to Him and be saved. Thank You Jesus! In Your name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Luke 1: 67-79; I Kings 1: 49-51; 2: 28-29; Deuteronomy 10: 20; Hebrews 4: 14-16.

## AUGUST 22—Light of Men

**READ:** John 1: 4-5, 9; 8: 12; 12: 35; Isaiah 9: 2

### REFLECT:

John 1: 4-5, 9-10—

*“In Him was life, and the life was the **light of men**. And the light shines in the darkness, And the darkness did not comprehend it. ...That was the **true Light which gives light to every man** coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”*

John 8: 12—

*“**I am the Light of the world.**”*

John 12: 35(b)—

*“...he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.”*

God spoke physical light into existence at Creation to separate the physical darkness from the physical light; and, Jesus Christ, the spoken Word made flesh, came into this world to separate the spiritual darkness from the spiritual light. Genesis 1:3; John 1: 1-4.

An important point to notice when examining these passages is that Jesus was the Light of **all men**. He came to give “**true Light to every man**”, and He is “**the Light of the world.**” Everyone is given the opportunity to be transported from the “*kingdom of darkness*”, which is ruled by Satan, into the Kingdom of Light or the Kingdom of God. Colossians 1: 13. Jesus shines the Light of Truth into every heart to expose their sin, but most choose to remain in darkness. Mathew 6: 22-23; 7: 13-14; Ephesians 5: 11-14. As the John 12: 35(b) passage states, those who continue in darkness do not know where they are going. Following His death, resurrection and ascension, that’s why it was so crucial for Jesus’ disciples to remain in Jerusalem until God the Father could send the promised Holy Spirit. He knew that, without the light of the Holy Spirit to light their paths, they would be lost. Psalm 119: 105. Second Peter 1: 9 confirms this: “*And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you would do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*” And He told His disciples, “*Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you **may become sons of light!***” John 12: 35. He knew that they needed to receive Him and the guidance of the Holy Spirit before they would be able to know where they were going. Without conviction of sin and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, we remain in darkness, lost in our sin. Do you allow the Light of Jesus to shine in your life? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You did not leave me in the darkness of my sin but that You brought the Light of Jesus into my light by the power of the Holy Spirit to convict me of my sin and my need for a Savior. Thank You for making me a child of the Light. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Acts 1: 4, 7-8; Colossians 1: 12-14; II Corinthians 4: 4-6; II Peter 1: 9-11.

## **AUGUST 23—Adonai—Jehovah (Sovereign Lord)**

**READ:** Genesis 15: 2, 8; Psalm 71

**REFLECT:** In calling God Adonai, or Sovereign Lord, it means that He alone is able to exercise supreme, permanent authority. In Hebrew in the Old Testament, Adonai was also the verbal plural to Yahweh and Jehovah, indicating that God is over all gods, sovereign over anyone or anything else that man might try to establish as a god. Many people in Scripture recognized this characteristic of God. Abram recognized God's sovereignty when he found himself questioning how his life would unfold. Abram was childless, and he petitioned God regarding this issue. Genesis 15: 2. Despite his doubts regarding fatherhood, Abram acknowledged God's sovereignty, and he desired to see God's promises fulfilled in his life.

In Genesis 15: 8, we find Abram doubting God again. Abram could not fathom how he could take possession of the Promised Land. Again, despite his doubts, Abram understood God's sovereignty in the situation. Abram did not have any physical evidence to guarantee that the land would be his. Rather, he had to trust the promises of an almighty, sovereign God. Abram understood that no one or anything could stand in the way of God's supreme authority.

Matt Redman sings a song called "You Never Let Go" that reminds me of God's sovereignty over all aspects of our lives. Here are some of the lyrics:

*"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
Your perfect love is casting out fear,  
And even when I'm caught in the middle of the storms of this life,  
I won't turn back. I know You are near.  
Oh no, You never let go. Through the calm and through the storm.  
Oh no, You never let go. In every high and every low.  
Oh no, You never let go. Lord, You never let go."*

Having trust in God's sovereignty does not guarantee that we will never have questions or doubts. But, we need to understand that, though our feelings may change, God does not change. Hebrews 13: 8. We cannot let the storms of life cause us to doubt God's sovereignty. Is there a situation in your life where you are having trouble giving God control and trusting Him? Ironically, we sometimes need to let go in order to see that God will not let go of us. Our sovereign God is in control of our lives, but it is up to us to relinquish complete control to Him.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You are Sovereign and that everything is under Your control. Help me to trust You as Adonai, the Sovereign God...sovereign over every aspect of my life. Thank You that You never let go of me, even when I sometimes let go of You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Deuteronomy 3: 24; Isaiah 6: 1.

## AUGUST 24—A Trap and A Snare

**READ:** Isaiah 8: 14-15; Matthew 7: 21-23; Job 18: 1-21

**REFLECT:** In Isaiah 8: 14-15, God tells the prophet Isaiah that he should continue to prophecy and live righteously before the Lord, because God will be a sanctuary to him. But, to the wicked He will be “*a trap and a snare*”. Prophetically, Isaiah was speaking of the coming Messiah who would be able to separate the good seeds from the bad—the One who would be “*a trap and a snare*” to the wicked. Matthew 13: 24-30.

Several places in Scripture, the trap or snare is called a “*gin*”, and “*gin*” means “*a contrivance, artifice, trap or a snare*”. A snare was a noose-like wire that would catch a small animal or fowl as it walked along the ground. Then, rather than kill it, the snare would snatch it up into the air, where it would be suspended by the heel, hanging it upside-down from a tree limb. This type of trap had been devised to capture animals in such a way that would not be in violation of Leviticus 17: 13, the passage that prescribes specifications for killing animals so as not to involve eating their life blood. By catching them in this fashion, the animal would be “found out”, or caught, so that the hunter could properly kill the animal later and prepare it for eating according to the specifications of the Law. Amos 3: 5.

In much the same way, Jesus is A Trap and A Snare for the wicked who try to live their lives as if they will never have to answer for their evil ways. But, as Jeremiah 17: 9-10 says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*” However, God can understand it. He searches the heart and exposes its’ evil ways. Psalm 139: 23-24. Even Job, the oldest book in the Bible, speaks of how the wicked are found out, or “meet their due”. “*The gin (snare) will take him by the heel and the robber shall prevail against him.*” Job 18: 9.

Jesus Himself warned the Pharisees of the “*woes*” that would come upon them because they appeared so righteous; but, in actuality were hypocritical, white-washed tombs. Matthew 23: 27-36. Although there are those whose evil deeds are obvious, there are still some whose wicked ways will not be exposed until it is too late at the Last Day—until Jesus, the Trap and the Snare has to say to them, “*Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*” Matthew 25: 41; I Timothy 5: 24-25. For Jesus said that not everyone who would say to Him, “*Lord, Lord,*” would enter the kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 7: 21-23.

Note: Reflecting back to the prophetic Scriptures that foreshadowed Christ, it comes to mind that Jacob was a type of Christ, or “a trap and a snare”, when he caught Esau by the heel while they were being born. Jacob was the “*gin*”, or heel trap that was separating the firstborn twin, or “*tare*”, from the “*good seed*” Jacob. Nothing escapes the Lord—He is A Trap and A Snare!

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You care for me and desire to remove evil from my life in order to sanctify me. I give You permission to search my heart and find any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Jeremiah 17: 9-10; Genesis 25: 26; Psalm 139: 23-24. Hosea 12: 3.

## **AUGUST 25—He Who Is Able To Keep You From Falling**

**READ:** Jude 1: 24; Philippians 1: 6; 2: 12-13

**REFLECT:** In the words of Louie Giglio, *“The Christian life isn’t hard, it’s not even difficult...It’s impossible! God’s not asking us to live the Christian life, because He knows we can’t do it, but He knows the One who can, and it just so happens that the Christian life is named after Him. We die to ourselves and let Christ live through us.”*

Giglio’s quote informs us that we will never succeed in living the Christian life in our own strength. In his Bible commentary, David Guzik elaborates on Jude 1: 24: *“Jude’s message of warning and doom might have depressed and discouraged his readers. Perhaps they thought that with so much false teaching and immorality around, very few Christians would ever reach heaven. Here he reminds them that the answer lies only in the power of God. He is able to keep you, and you aren’t able to keep yourself.”\**

We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Hebrews 12: 2. The second our focus shifts from what He is doing, to what we think we can do, we start to fall. When we rely on ourselves, we set ourselves up to believe Satan’s lies, fall into deception and make decisions apart from the will of God for our lives.

This is not to say that when we follow God, our lives are perfect. We will make mistakes. But, God in His mercy and grace is always there to pick us up, brush us off, and give us a fresh start. We are not declared righteous because our lives are flawless. Rather, we will be presented as faultless because we have trusted Jesus as our Lord and Savior and can then stand in His righteousness alone. Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us when we trust in Him. Hallelujah, what a Savior! Do you believe that Jesus is *“able to keep you from falling”*? Record your thoughts.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that You have begun a good work in me and **You** alone are the One who is able to complete that good work until the Day of Christ Jesus. Thank You that You keep me from falling from Your grace, over and over again. Thank You that Jesus will present me faultless one day before Your throne because of His righteousness and not that of my own. I praise You Lord! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Galatians 2: 20; Philippians 1: 21; II Corinthians 5: 21.

\*(<http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/6501.htm>, accessed 7/11/06.

## AUGUST 26—Leader

**READ:** Isaiah 55: 3-4; Matthew 6: 13; Psalm 23: 1-6; 25: 5; 139: 10

**REFLECT:** A leader is someone who directs the path that others are to follow, or charts the course of action in a particular situation. Often leaders are chosen because they have a special skill or advantage in that particular area. Most often in Scripture, God is portrayed as the leader of His people in the role of a shepherd. Jesus especially is portrayed as Our Shepherd. *“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;...”* Isaiah 53: 6; I Peter 2: 25.

Because God is our Creator and the Sovereign Lord of the universe, He has more than a special skill or advantage that would make Him qualified to be our Leader. His ways are so far above our ways, and His thoughts above ours, that it is impossible for us to understand where He is often leading us. Isaiah 55: 8-9. Isaiah 30: 21 says, *“Whether you turn to the right or the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”*

Even though we often pray the Lord’s prayer, saying, *“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”*, we frequently don’t consider what we have prayed, and we walk away, continuing to plot our own course. Matthew 6: 13. But Jesus promised blessings one-hundred fold over in this life to those who would follow Him, and in the life to come, eternal life. Mark 10: 29-30. However, as Jesus steadily led His disciples toward the Cross, He imparted to them that following Him meant giving up others and the things of this world to put Him first.

Although when we belong to Jesus, we are told we now have the mind of Christ, our vision is still often clouded and our way is not completely sure because we continue to allow sin to influence our lives. I Corinthians 13:12; 2: 16. But, this is when trust must enter the picture and our faith should allow us to follow our Leader no matter what our understanding of the situation is. Consider the promises of Isaiah 42: 16, *“I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.”* His promises are true. So allow Him to **lead** you; and, do it blindly, trusting Him by faith.

**PRAY:** Pray the words to an old, familiar hymn by Dorothy A. Thrupp and William B. Bradbury, *“Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us”*, thanking Him that He makes a way where there often seems to be no way.

*“Savior, like a shepherd lead us; much we need Thy tender care;  
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare;  
Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou has bought us, Thine we are.” Amen.*

**FURTHER STUDY:** Isaiah 30: 21; 63: 11-14; Matthew 10: 29-34; Revelation 7: 17.

## **AUGUST 27—Lord of Heaven**

**READ:** Acts 17: 24; Matthew 6: 20; John 14: 1-6; Psalm 11: 4(a)

**REFLECT:** Did you ever think how amazing it is that Jesus Christ –the One and Only God-Man—stepped down from His throne room in Heaven to be confined within human flesh and to walk among us on this sin-laden earth? As King David said, “*What is man that You are mindful of him; the son of man that You are for him?*” Psalm 8: 4; Hebrews 2: 6-8. What made the Lord of Heaven come to this earth? The love of God is what brought Him here.

Although Jesus came to this earth to die on a cross for us and to give us eternal life, He was only here for a short time. When He returned to heaven, God the Father sent the Holy Spirit to be with us, until Jesus could come to take us to be with Him in Heaven. John 14: 6. Because of what Jesus did on the Cross, our citizenship is with Christ in Heaven, if we belong to Him. Philippians 3: 20.

So, when things of this world make you weary and it appears as if evil is triumphing, remember that Jesus is in Heaven where He is preparing a special place for you to be with Him for eternity. As He told us, “...*(S)to*re up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6: 19-21.

I don’t know about you, but Jesus is my ultimate treasure, and He is in Heaven. So, Heaven is where I long to be, worshipping the Lord of Heaven. Heaven is where my heart is. “*For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; He entered Heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.*” Hebrews 9: 24. One day soon, we will enter Heaven and bear the likeness of the One who died for us, the Lord of Heaven. “*The first man (or Adam) was of the dust of the earth, the second man from Heaven (Jesus)...so shall we bear the likeness of the man from Heaven.*” I Corinthians 15: 47-49.

Jesus is in Heaven now at the right hand of God the Father. We know this because Stephen, the first martyr, looked up into Heaven before he was stoned and he saw Jesus there. “*But, Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to Heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*” Acts 7: 55-56. Do you long for the appearing of the Lord of Heaven to take you to be with Him in Heaven? Is your heart there, with Him, or does this world still hold you captive? II Timothy 4: 8; Acts 1: 6-11.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that my citizenship is in Heaven with You because of what Jesus did for me on the Cross. I thank You that Jesus is now preparing a place for me in Heaven and that one day soon, He will return to take me to be with You and Him there. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Philippians 3: 20; Acts 1: 6-11; 7: 55-56; Hebrews 12: 22-24.

## **AUGUST 28—Diadem of Beauty**

**READ:** Isaiah 28: 5; Zechariah 9: 16; II Timothy 4: 8

**REFLECT:** A diadem is “*a jeweled crown or headband worn as a symbol of royalty*”. In Isaiah 28: 5, the Lord is referred to as a “*crown of glory and a diadem of beauty*” for the remnant of His people. Although we have never seen Jesus on this earth wearing a diadem of beauty, His disciples saw, and we are told in Scripture, that He was forced to wear a crown of thorns during His trial and crucifixion, as He was mocked and called the “*King of the Jews*”. Matthew 27: 29-31; John 19: 1-5.

Anyone who does not belong to Jesus would fail to see any beauty whatsoever, in a crown of thorns, because the things of God are foolishness to those who don't believe. But, to those who belong to Christ, the crown of thorns is, indeed, a “*diadem of beauty*” and a symbol of holiness. I Chronicles 16: 23-31. In fact, the Apostle Paul explained to the Corinthian church that the message of Christ crucified is “*a stumbling block*” to the Jews and “*foolishness*” to the Greeks, but to Christians it is “*the power of God and the wisdom of god.*” I Corinthians 1: 20-25.

Personally, I not only see in the crown of thorns, the power and wisdom of God, but I also see the love of God for the lost, the obedience of Christ to His Father and the amazing grace and mercy of God in the forgiveness of my sins. The painful thorns that pierced His head, pierce my heart to remind me that He bore the pain and suffering for my sins, and took the punishment that I deserved.

As the King of Kings, the crown or diadem that Jesus wears in heaven is not only a symbol of royalty, but it also is a symbol of the victory that He has won over sin and death. During the time of Christ, a laurel wreath or crown was a much sought after prize that was awarded to the one who triumphed in athletic games and races. To Paul, those who had come to Christ because of his preaching of the gospel, he greatly cherished and counted as joy and crowns, probably representative of these desired victors' crowns. Philippians 4: 1; I Corinthians 9: 25-27.

Because the crown Jesus now wears is “the” Diadem of Beauty, I will have eternal life with Him in Heaven. Even though He alone is worthy of all glory, honor and praise—because of His great love for us, during the Millennial Kingdom reign, He will make all Christ-followers “*kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth*” with Him. Revelation 4: 10-11. One day in the throne room of Heaven, the crowns that believers will be given as rewards, we will cast at His feet in grateful admiration and praise. Revelation 4: 10.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that I have victory over sin and death because Jesus wore the crown of thorns—the Diadem of Beauty—for me. I thank You Lord that Jesus is now seated beside You in Heaven crowned with honor, glory and praise because He alone is worthy! In His holy and precious name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** John 19: 1-6; Psalm 27: 4; 96: 1-6; Isaiah 33: 17; 53: 2; 61: 3.

## AUGUST 29—Holy and Awesome

**READ:** Psalm 111: 9

**REFLECT:** God is **Holy**. He is perfect, infinite and He alone is worthy of our worship. God is Awesome. He inspires in us mixed emotions of reverence, respect, dread and wonder. God is so vast that it is virtually impossible for our finite minds to comprehend all of who He is.

God's creation gives us just a glimpse of His awesomeness. He created our bodies so intricately that if just one electrolyte is off-balance, the consequences can be fatal. All of our organ systems work in perfect harmony with the others to keep us alive. He created our defense systems to keep us healthy. Should a foreign object enter our body, there are a slew of protective mechanisms that serve to prevent infection.

The earth is also full of beauty and variety that could only have come from the hand of a holy and awesome God. The same God who created dandelions and snowflakes also created tropical forests. The same God who created thunder also created rainbows. How awesome is He!

Songwriter Mark Altrogge captures the awesomeness of God in his song "*I Stand In Awe*:"

*"You are beautiful beyond description  
Too marvelous for words  
Too wonderful for comprehension  
Like nothing ever seen or heard.  
Who can grasp Your infinite wisdom  
Who can fathom the depth of Your love  
You are beautiful beyond description  
Majesty enthroned above  
And I stand in awe of you  
Holy God to whom all praise is due  
I stand in awe of you."*

**PRAY:** What characteristics of God evoke awe in you? Is it His holiness, His mercy, His grace, His unconditional love? Take some time to simply be in awe of Who God is to you today and then compose and record a prayer to thank Him for His characteristics that you admire. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Deuteronomy 10: 17 (ESV); Hebrews 12: 28-29 (ESV); Revelation 4: 8; Isaiah 6: 1-3.

## AUGUST 30—I AM

**READ:** Exodus 3: 1-15; John 6: 35; 8: 12; 10: 7, 11; 11: 25; 14: 6; 15:1

**REFLECT:** When Moses stood before the burning bush, he asked the Lord what His name was and the Lord answered him saying *“I AM WHO I AM” ... Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’*”. Exodus 3: 14. The name “Lord” as used in this passage, or Jehovah, comes from the Hebrew word *“havah”*, which means *“to be, to become”*. Prior to this time, the Lord spoke of Himself only as Jehovah, but He had never made Himself *“known”* to the Israelites before by this name.

Through the name I AM WHO I AM, God was telling His people that He was the self-existent, preeminent One, the One who *“always was, is and forevermore shall be”*, the One without beginning or end. As the covenant-keeping God, He was fulfilling the covenant He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give them the land of Canaan, and to establish His name with them forever. As Kay Arthur explained in her book, *“Lord, I Want to Know You”*, *“Although Jehovah was used as early as Genesis 2: 4, it wasn’t until this revelation to Moses that they understood that this name went with God’s covenant promise to His people.”*

Later, Jesus would establish Himself as deity when He explained to the scribes and the Pharisees, who had just said that Abraham was their father, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM”*. John 8: 58. Considering this blasphemy—saying He was God—they picked up stones to stone Him. Throughout His ministry, Jesus would combine the name of I AM with other life-giving titles to declare His divinity and self-existent Oneness with God the Father.

John 6: 35—*“And Jesus said to them, ‘I AM the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”*

John 8: 12—*“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I AM the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’”*

John 10: 7—*“Then Jesus said to them again, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, I AM the door of the sheep...I AM the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.’”*

John 10: 11—*“I AM the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”*

John 11: 25—*“I AM the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”*

John 14: 6—*“I AM the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

John 15: 5—*“I AM the true vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”*

**PRAY:** Today, compose a prayer and record it, thanking God for sending Jesus as the Great I AM. In your prayer, thank Him for Who He is and has become in your own life beyond even the “I AM’s” that He claimed to be in the Gospel of John. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** John 18: 4-9; 8: 58; Genesis 2: 4; Psalm 9: 10.

## **AUGUST 31—Jehovah Tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness)**

**READ:** Jeremiah 23: 1-6; II Corinthians 5: 21; Matthew 5: 20; Isaiah 64: 6

**REFLECT: Matthew 5: 20**—“... (U)nless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees, and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

**Romans 3: 10, 23**—“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one;’” and, “... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

**Isaiah 64: 6**—“...and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;...”

As we have done this study, we have examined the righteousness of the Lord many times. Understanding that we can never stand before the Lord unless we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, let's dig a little deeper and see what stands in the way of us ever receiving salvation through our own righteousness. Do you know why the Lord has to be our righteousness and why we cannot be forgiven of our sins and receive eternal life through our own righteous deeds and acts? It's because we have a heart problem. Jeremiah 17: 9 says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure, who can understand it?*” Our sinful hearts cannot achieve anything worthy of God's grace through our own efforts. Unless the blood of Christ washes us clean and the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts to take control, we will continually fall victim to the evils of the world, the flesh and Satan's schemes. Romans 7: 14-25.

However, there is Good News! The Jeremiah passage about the “deceitful heart” is rhetorical. There is a cure and that cure is Jesus Christ. “*The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*” Isaiah 53: 6. Second Corinthians 5: 21 says, “*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become **the righteousness of God***”. We don't have to continually struggle to “save” ourselves. Jesus Christ has provided the gift of forgiveness that leads to eternal life that could never be provided through the blood of bulls and goats. Hebrews 10: 1-4. When Jesus becomes the Lord, Your Righteousness, He removes your heart of stone and replaces it with a new heart of flesh in which the Holy Spirit lives. Hebrews 8: 10.

All of our striving is useless. We can live a victorious life, freed from our sins by the blood of Christ—the Lord Our Righteousness. Once we belong to Jesus, not only are our sins forgiven, but they are remembered no more. We can stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ, not having to worry about ever “being good enough”. Having received the righteousness of Jesus, we no longer have to live by the flesh, but we can now be led by the Spirit. We can fight the battle that rages in the spiritual realms by putting on the breastplate of righteousness and “standing firm”, letting God fight our battles. Ephesians 6: 14.

**PRAY:** Father God, I thank You that Jesus, the Lord Our Righteousness, has a way for me to one day stand before Your throne, forgiven of my sins and washed clean by the blood of Jesus. I thank You that I will stand before You in the righteous robes of Christ because of Your great love for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Jeremiah 31: 31-34; Hebrews 8: 6-13; I John 1: 9; Romans 3: 10, 23.

