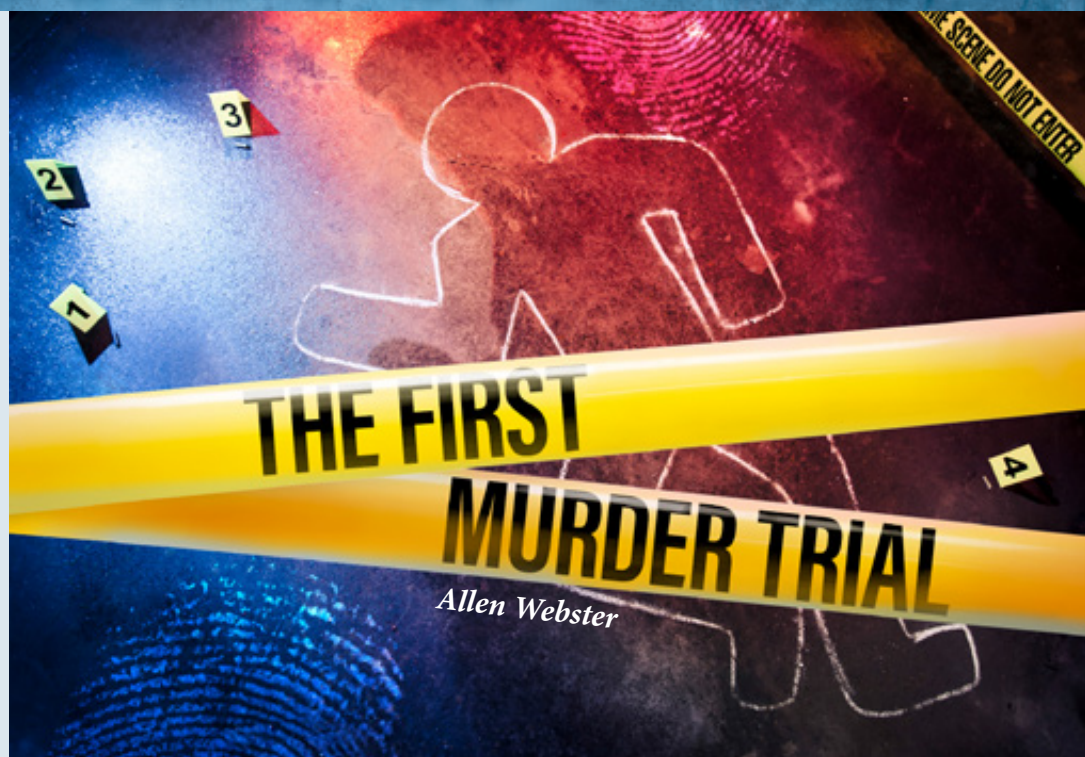


HOUSE to HOUSE  
HEART to HEART

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# House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 6



*Allen Webster*

There always seems to be a high-profile murder case in the news: O.J. Simpson, Scott Peterson, Robert Blake. The news media fan the flames, believing in the old axiom, “If it bleeds, it leads.”

Family murder adds to the intrigue. The BJS Special Report, a survey of murder cases in the courts of large urban U.S. counties, found that 16 percent of murder victims were members of the defendant’s family: 6.5 percent were killed by their spouses, 3.5 percent by their parents, 1.9 percent by their own children, 1.5 percent by their siblings, and 2.6 percent by other relatives.

Family murder is nothing new. In fact, the very first murder case involved two brothers: Cain and Abel. Let’s visit the scene.

Cain wilted under God’s intense cross-examination (Genesis 4:9). He was charged with murder and no time had been wasted in getting the accused into court (cf. Ecclesiastes 8:11). The defense

decided to plead innocent on the grounds of ignorance. When questioned as to the whereabouts of the victim, he answered, “I do not know.”

God was not a newcomer to the courtroom. He had already brought Adam and Eve to trial for violation of divine law (cf. 3:8–13).<sup>1</sup> God did not ask, “Where is Abel your brother?” for information, but for amplification. He knew—He only asked to remind Cain of where Abel was.

## EVASION AND PERJURY

Adam and Eve were evasive but humble. Cain was hardened and cynical. He boldly lied to God. To the question about Abel’s whereabouts, he replied, “I do not know.” He did know, for he had just killed him. He then hurled a rhetorical question at God: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (4:9). This question literally implies, “Am I supposed to watch him all the time?”

Cain sought to dodge responsibility, but God held him accountable. Cain’s ac-

tion was a renunciation of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This account was later used for an example of a lack of natural brotherly love (1 John 3:11–12). Note that “brother” is used seven times in this passage. It is bad enough to kill a complete stranger but far worse to kill one’s own brother.

We are our brother’s keepers, too (cf. John 3:16; 1 John 3:16), and God holds us responsible for how we treat them (cf. Luke 10:29–37). Sin always finds us out, even though we, like Cain, may try to hide it (Numbers 32:23). We cannot injure another without God noticing. Jesus asked Saul of Tarsus, “Why persecutes thou me?” when Saul had never even met Jesus—he had persecuted Jesus by hurting the Lord’s followers. Paul said, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). Inasmuch as God is the Father of us all, it naturally follows that we are all brothers (Isaiah 64:8; Malachi 2:10; Acts 17:26; Ephesians 4:6).

When one comes to understand and believe that he is a part of the brotherhood of man, he is obligated to practice certain activities:

- Love his neighbor as himself (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39).
- Treat others as he wishes to be treated (Matthew 7:12).



- Rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep (Romans 12:15).
- Restore the erring (Galatians 6:1).
- Do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10).
- Give to those in need (Ephesians 4:28).

### MOTIVE

Evidently, Cain’s actions were motivated by envy, which is a “rotteness to the bones” (Proverbs 14:30). You could say, then, that Cain had a “bone disease!” Envy is rooted in selfishness. A loving person cannot be a selfish person (1 Corinthians 10:24; 13:4; Philippians 2:4; cf. Matthew 16:24; Galatians 2:20). “As frost to the bud, and blight to the blossom, even is self-interest to friendship; for confidence cannot dwell where selfishness is porter at the gate.”<sup>2</sup> Christians are warned not to allow the bone disease to invade their spiritual body because it soon develops into a heart problem (Galatians 5:21, 26; Romans 13:13; 1 Peter 2:1<sup>3</sup>). “Envy” is defined as “an evil affection of the heart which makes men grieve and fret at the good and prosperity of others.”<sup>4</sup> It comes from a word that means “to look against, to eye with evil intent.”<sup>5</sup> Envy is worse than wrath and anger (Proverbs 27:4); it is unnatural and inhuman (James 3:14–15).

### MODUS OPERANDI

How does one go from man to murderer? What steps lead one down that path? Envy is the mother of many sins, especially hatred and murder. Its tools are whisperings, backbiting, and lies (cf. 1 Peter 2:1; 2 Corinthians 12:20; 1 Timothy 6:4–5). It leads to family strife (Genesis 30:1), property disputes (Genesis 26:14), mistreating others (Genesis 37:11; Acts 7:9), national rebellion (Numbers 16:1–3; Psalm 106:16), and persecution of Christians (Acts 5:17<sup>6</sup>).

Envy led Cain, Saul, and the Jews to murder. Remember Saul could not bear the maidens’ praise of David (1 Samuel 18:7–8). He jealously festered into an open sore, and the king chased the boy around in a ridiculous attempt to kill his own servant. Later, at Saul’s death, a discerning person realizes it was not the Philistines who got the king. It really was not even his own sword that thrust him through

(though that was the instrument). Envy killed Saul. Remember Calvary! Dark against the sky stood that cruel cross. Above the sin and strife rang out an anguished, lonely cry. Jesus, too, died a victim of envy and jealousy (Matthew 27:18). Annas and Caiaphas, the Pharisees, and Scribes, begrudging His success, murdered Him out of envy.



### VERDICT AND SENTENCING

God, the Prosecutor, summed up His airtight case, and God, the Judge, passed sentence. *Guilty!* The fruits of envy are always misery and woe, death and destruction (Esther 5:10–14; 7:10; Daniel 6:1–24). The citizens of Thasos once erected a statue to Theagenes, a renowned athlete in the Greek games. One of his rivals became so envious that he went every night and with repeated blows tried to break the statue down. He finally succeeded, only to be crushed by the statue as it fell from its pedestal. So envy does to all who harbor it in their bosom.

Pull up the weeds of envy from your soul. The harvest is bitter.

The first murder trial didn’t last as long as O.J. Simpson’s, Scott Peterson’s, or Robert Blake’s, but we’re still talking about it six thousand years later.

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> The first two human questions in the Bible had to do with sin. The first came after man’s struggle with Satan, the second after man’s struggle with man.

<sup>2</sup> Tupper

<sup>3</sup> “Lay aside” here literally means “to discard clothing.”

<sup>4</sup> Cruden

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 1 Samuel 18:8–9, “eyed,” *avan*, “to watch with jealousy;” cf. Mark 7:21–22, “an evil eye,” *ophthalmos*, figuratively “envy from the jealous side-glance” (Strong).

<sup>6</sup> “indignation” means “envy, jealousy;” cf. 13:45; 17:5.





# WHO I AM MAKES A DIFFERENCE



A teacher in New York decided to honor all of her high school seniors by telling them the difference they had made. She called each student to the front of the class, one at a time, and told each how he or she had made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each with a blue ribbon, imprinted with gold letters, which read, "Who I Am Makes a Difference."

She later decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community. She gave students three blue ribbons each and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. They were to report back in three weeks on who was honored and what the results were.

One boy went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with career planning. He pinned the blue ribbon on his shirt and gave him the other two ribbons. He explained, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to find somebody to honor. Present him a blue ribbon and then give him the extra one so he can acknowledge a third person to keep this acknowledgment ceremony going. Report back to me what happened."

Later that day, the junior executive went in to see his boss, who had been kind of a grouch lately. He told his boss that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. He then asked him if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon and would give him permission to put it on him. He said, "Well, sure." The junior executive placed it right on his boss's jacket, above his heart. He gave him the last ribbon, saying, "Take this and pass it on by honoring someone else. The boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school, and he wants to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people."

That night the boss sat his fourteen-year-old son down and said, "The most incredible thing happened to me today. I

was in my office, and a junior executive came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine! He thinks I'm a creative genius! Then he put this ribbon that says, "Who I Am Makes a Difference," on my jacket. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find someone else to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about who I would honor, and I thought of you. I want to honor you. My days are hectic and when I come home, I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess. But tonight, I just want, well, to let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid, and I love you!"

The startled boy started to sob. He couldn't stop crying, His whole body shook. He looked at this father and said through his tears, "Dad, I've been sitting in my room writing a letter to you and Mom, explaining why I had killed myself, and I asked you to forgive me. I was going to commit suicide tonight after you were asleep. I just didn't think that you cared at all." His father walked upstairs and found a heartfelt letter full of anguish and pain.

The boss went back to work a changed man. He was no longer a grouch but constantly let his employees know that they made a difference. The junior executive helped other young people with career planning, and never forgot to let them know that they made a difference in his life . . . one being the boss' son. And the young boy and his classmates learned a valuable lesson, "Who you are *does* make a difference."

*"Everyone helped his neighbour, and said to his brother, 'Be of good courage!' So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith; he who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil..."*

ISAIAH 41:6-7



## Jesus Borrowed . . .

- a place for His birth
- a house to sleep in
- a boat to preach from
- an animal to ride on
- a room to meet privately with His friends, and
- a tomb to be buried in.

**He who owned it all had nothing of His own!**

*"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."*

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

## Jesus Left . . .

- His purse to Judas
- His clothes to the soldiers
- His body to Joseph of Arimathea
- His mother to John
- His peace to the disciples
- His supper to His followers
- His gospel to the world
- His presence with God's children, and
- His crown for me.

*"... for me a crown of righteousness."*

2 TIMOTHY 4:8

## God's Plan for Saving Man

**Divine Love:** John 3:16

**God's Grace:** Ephesians 2:8

**Christ's Blood:** Romans 5:9

**Holy Spirit's Word:** Romans 1:16

**Sinner's Faith:** Acts 16:31

**Sinner's Repentance:** Luke 13:3

**Sinner's Confession:** Romans 10:10

**Sinner's Baptism:** Acts 22:16

**Christian's Love:** Matthew 22:37

**Christian's Work:** James 2:24

**Christian's Hope:** Romans 8:24

**Christian's Endurance:** Revelation 2:10

## Mother Is Still Watching

She always leaned to watch for us, anxious if we were late,  
In winter by the window, in summer by the gate.  
And though we mocked her tenderly, who had such foolish care,  
The long way home was always more safe because she waited there.  
Her thoughts were all so full of us, she never could forget!  
And so I think that where she is, she must be waiting yet.  
Waiting until we come home to her, anxious if we are late.

Watching from Heaven's window, leaning on Heaven's gate.

—Margaret Widdom

## What Mothers Do

She carried me under her heart, loved me before I was born.

She took God's hand and walked through the "valley of the shadow" that I might live.

She bathed me when I was helpless, clothed me when I was naked, fed me when I was hungry, rocked me to sleep when I was weary, and sang to me as the voice of an angel.

She held my hand till I learned to walk, suffered with my sorrow, laughed with my joy, glowed with my triumph, and while I knelt at her side, she taught my lips to pray.

She was a loyal friend when all others failed.

Through all the days of my youth, she gave me strength for my weaknesses, courage for my despair, and hope for my helpless heart.

She prayed for me whether life was flooded with sunshine or saddened by shadows.

I can never repay the debt I owe to my mother.

*"Honor your father and mother..."*

EPHESIANS 6:2

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to [www.housetohouse.com](http://www.housetohouse.com).

## Syntax—and Other Wisdom

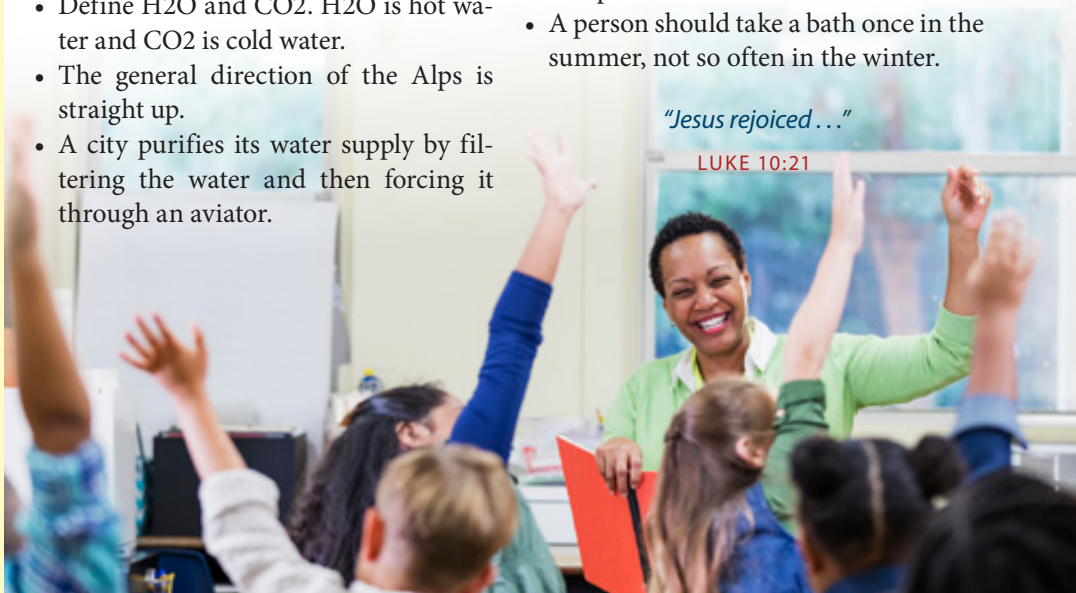
Some grade schoolteachers keep journals of amusing things their students write in papers. Here are a few examples:

- Syntax is the money collected at church from sinners.
- The future of "I give" is "I take."
- The parts of speech are lungs and air.
- The inhabitants of Moscow are called Mosquitoes.
- Define H<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub>. H<sub>2</sub>O is hot water and CO<sub>2</sub> is cold water.
- The general direction of the Alps is straight up.
- A city purifies its water supply by filtering the water and then forcing it through an aviator.

- The people who followed the Lord are called the twelve opossums.
- The spinal column is a long bunch of bones. The head sits on the top and you sit on the bottom.
- The four seasons are salt, pepper, mustard, and vinegar.
- The word trousers is an uncommon noun because it is singular at the top and plural at the bottom.
- A person should take a bath once in the summer, not so often in the winter.

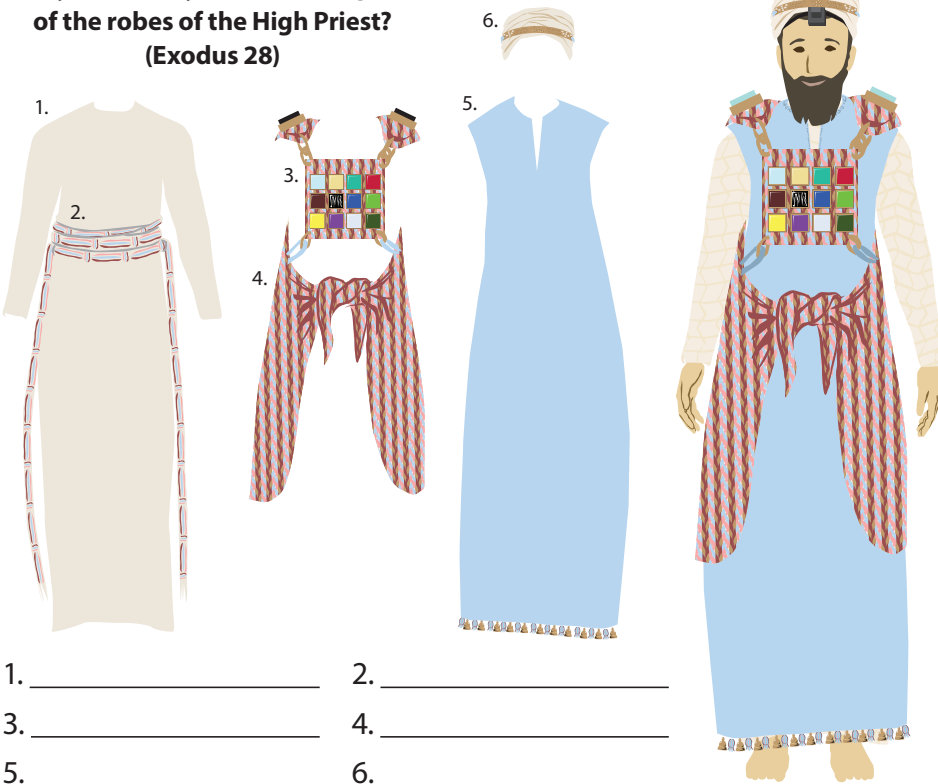
*"Jesus rejoiced..."*

LUKE 10:21



## Just for Fun The Robes of the High Priest

Can you identify the different parts of the robes of the High Priest?  
(Exodus 28)



1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_



# What Is God Telling Me?



What is God telling me with the problems He permits in my life? The problems we face will either defeat us or develop us, depending on how we respond to them. Unfortunately, most people fail to see how God wants to use problems for good in their lives. They react foolishly and resent their problems rather than pausing to consider what benefit they might bring.

Here are five ways God wants to use the problems in our lives:

1. **God uses problems to DIRECT us.** Sometimes God must light a fire under us to get us moving. Problems often point us in a new direction and motivate us to change our ways (Proverbs 20:30).
2. **God uses problems to INSPECT us.** People are like tea bags. If you want to know what's inside them, just drop them in hot water! Has God ever tested your faith with a problem? What do problems reveal about you? "My brethren, count it all joy when you

fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2-3).

3. **God uses problems to CORRECT us.** Some lessons we learn only through pain and failure. It's likely that when we were children, our parents told us not to touch a hot stove, but we probably learned by being burned. Sometimes we only learn the value of something like health, money, or a relationship by losing it. "My lips shall utter praise, for You teach me Your statutes. My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:171-172).
4. **God uses problems to PROTECT us.** A problem can be a blessing in disguise if it prevents us from being harmed by something more serious. Last year a friend was fired for refusing to do something unethical that his boss had asked him to do. His unemployment was a problem—but

it saved him from being convicted and sent to prison a year later when management's actions were eventually discovered. Joseph said ". . . you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good . . ." (Genesis 50:20).

5. **God uses problems to PERFECT us.** Problems, when responded to correctly, are character builders. God is far more interested in your character than your comfort. Your relationship to God and your character are the only two things you're going to take with you into eternity. "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

Here's the point: God is at work in our lives—even when we do not recognize it or understand it. However, it is much easier and profitable when we cooperate with Him.

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



## Bible Quiz

VOLUME 26:6

Send in your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We will grade and return them and enclose the bookmark "How We Got the English Bible" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

### Answers to Previous Quizzes

**V. 26:4 Starts with the Letter "F":** 1. Faith (Hebrews 11:1); 2. False (Matthew 7:15); 3. Fasted (Matthew 4:2); 4. Fall (Proverbs 16:18); 5. Foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11); 6. Fathers (Ephesians 6:4); 7. Fear (Proverbs 9:10); 8. Feet (John 13:5); 9. Felix (Acts 24:25); 10. Fellowship (1 John 1:7); 11. Figs (Isaiah 38:21); 12. Frankincense (Matthew 2:11); 13. Firmament (Genesis 1:6); 14. First (Matthew 7:5); 15. Fishermen (Matthew 4:18-21); 16. Flatters (Proverbs 2:16); 17. Flesh (Galatians 6:8); 18. Flock (1 Peter 5:2).

**V. 26:5 Famous Old Testament Quotations:** 1. Season (Ecclesiastes 3:1); 2. Beautiful (Ecclesiastes 3:11); 3. A little child (Isaiah 11:6); 4. Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14); 5. Make his face to shine upon you; (Numbers 6:24-26). 6. Return (Ecclesiastes 12:7); 7. God created (Genesis 1:1); 8. Man, wife, flesh (Genesis 2:24); 9. No other gods (Exodus 20:3); 10. A carved image (Exodus 20:4); 11. In vain (Exodus 20:7); 12. Father, mother (Exodus 20:12); 13. Murder (Exodus 20:13); 14. Steal (Exodus 20:15); 15. False witness (Exodus 20:16); 16. False witness (Exodus 20:16); 17. Covet (Exodus 20:17); 18. One (Deuteronomy 6:4); 19. Love, heart, strength (Deuteronomy 6:5); 20 Diligently, children (Deuteronomy 6:7).

## Starts with the Letter "G"

**Directions:** Find answers in the following passages: Genesis 1:26, 3:1-6; 2:15; Exodus 6:16; 30:13; Numbers 11:5; Judges 8:35; 16:1-3; 1 Samuel 11:15; 17:4; 31:1-7; 2 Kings 5:25; Esther 7:9-10; Matthew 7:13-14; 26:36-56; Luke 1:26-38; John 6:1; 19:13; 20:15-16; Acts 18:12-17; 22:3; Galatians 1:6-9; 3:14; 2 Timothy 2:24; 1 Peter 1:1; 3 John 1-5. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Pilate's court (means "Pavement")
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Angel that announced Christ's birth
3. John addressed his third epistle to the well-beloved \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Peter wrote his first epistle to pilgrims in \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The epistle to the \_\_\_\_\_ warned about leaving the true gospel.
6. The Sea of \_\_\_\_\_ is also called the Sea of Tiberias.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Proconsul of Achaia who dismissed charges against Paul
8. Haman was hanged on the \_\_\_\_\_ he made for Mordecai.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul was trained by this famous Jewish teacher.
10. Adam and Eve lived in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Eden.
11. Christ was once mistaken by Mary to be a \_\_\_\_\_.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ A favorite Egyptian food
13. Christ urged us to enter in at the narrow \_\_\_\_\_.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Home of Goliath
15. \_\_\_\_\_ Samson carried this city's gates away.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ Elisha's servant
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Bible book that records man's creation and fall
18. The blessing of Abraham came on the \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus.
19. The servant of the Lord must be \_\_\_\_\_ to all.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ Twentieth part of a shekel
21. \_\_\_\_\_ Eldest son of Levi
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Scene of Christ's agony and betrayal
23. \_\_\_\_\_ Judge who was also called Jerubbaal
24. \_\_\_\_\_ Where King Saul died
25. \_\_\_\_\_ Where Saul was made king

# THE GREAT I AM!

He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He is Creator of all and the keeper of Creation. He is the architect of the universe and the manager of all times. He always was, He always is, and He always will be unmoved, unchanged, and undefeated, but never undone.

He was bruised but brought healing. He was pierced but eased pain. He was bound but brought freedom. He was dead but brought life. He was buried but raises us. He reigns and brings peace.

The world can't understand Him, armies can't defeat Him, schools can't fully explain Him, and leaders can't ignore Him.

Herod couldn't kill him, the Pharisees couldn't confuse Him, and the people couldn't hold Him. Nero couldn't crush Him. Hitler couldn't silence Him, the New Age can't replace Him, and talk show pundits can't explain Him away.

He is light, love, longevity, and Lord. He is goodness, kindness, gentleness, and God. He is holy, righteous, mighty, powerful, and pure. His ways are right. His word is eternal; His will is unchanging; His mind is on me.

He is my Redeemer. He is my Savior. He is my guide. He is my peace. He is my joy. He is my comfort. His is my Lord. I serve Him because His bond is love. His burden is light, and His goal for me is abundant life. I follow Him because He is the wisdom of the wise, the power of the powerful, the ancient of days, the ruler of rulers, the leaders of leaders, and the sovereign Lord of all that was and is and is to come.

If that seems impressive to you, think of this. His goal is a relationship with ME! He will never leave me, never forsake me, never mislead me, never forget me, never overlook me, and never cancel my appointment.

When I fall, He lifts me up. When I fail, He forgives. When I am weak, He is strong. When I am lost, He is the way. When I am afraid, He is my courage. When I stumble, He steadies me. When I am hurt, He heals me. When I am broken, He mends me. When I am blind, He leads me. When I am hungry, He feeds me. When I face trials, He is with me. When I face persecution, He shields me. When I face problems, He comforts me. When I face loss, He provides for me. When I face death, He carries me home.

He is everything for everybody, everywhere, every time, and every way. He is God. He is faithful. I am His, and He is mine! —Author Unknown

*"Do not be afraid . . . I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."*

GENESIS 15:1

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

## Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at [gbntv.org](http://gbntv.org).

## I want to learn more about the Bible!

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer requests or comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like:



☐ A Bible Correspondence Course



☐ A DVD Bible Study



☐ An In-Home Bible Study

## Featured Tracts!

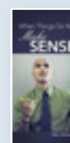
- ☐ Sprinkling, Pouring, or Immersion?
- ☐ The Seven Best Ways to Die
- ☐ I Would Go To Church, But All They Want Is Money
- ☐ Never Make These Excuses To God



### More subjects:



☐ A War of World Views Evolution VS Christianity



☐ When Things Do Not Make Sense



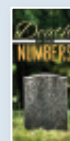
☐ 5 Links in God's Chain of Fellowship



☐ The King of Kings



☐ Jesus Loves Me This I Know



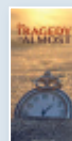
☐ Death By Numbers



☐ What Makes A Nation Great



☐ Are All Men Accountable To The Bible?



☐ The Tragedy Of Almost

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Visit [www.housetohouse.com](http://www.housetohouse.com) for more subjects.

VOLUME 26:6

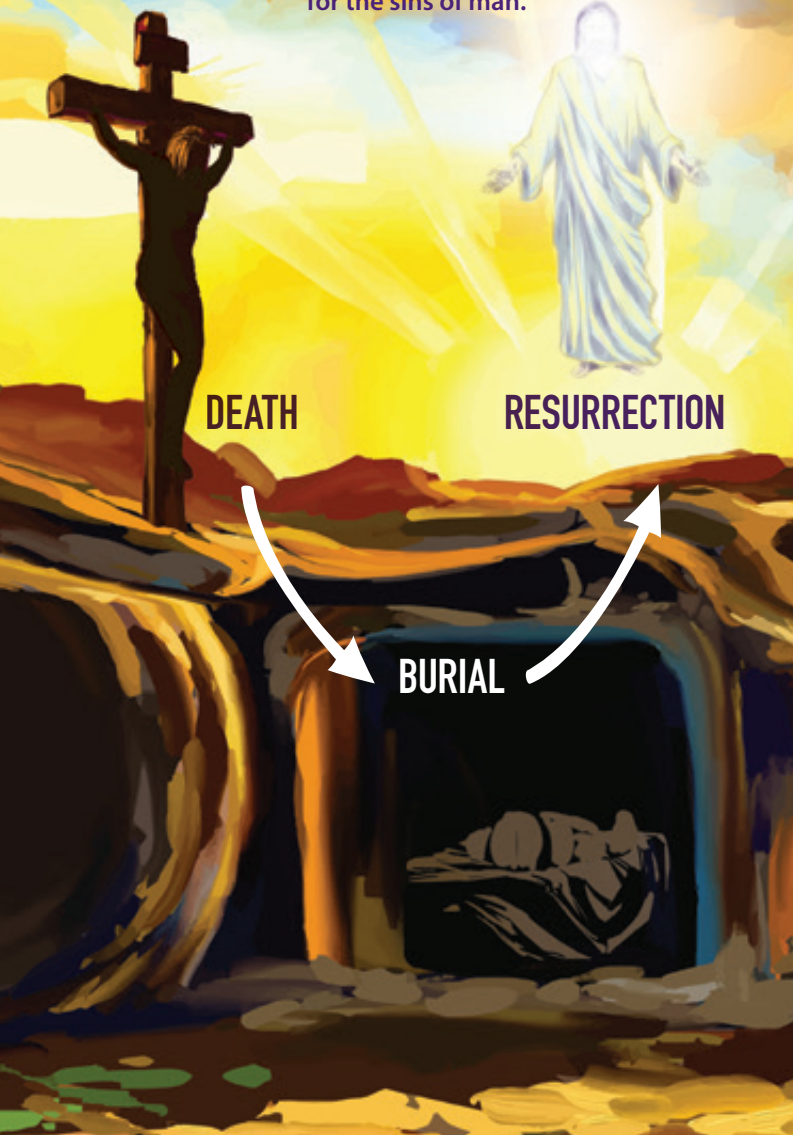




# THE GOSPEL ENACTED

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3–4

**Jesus the Christ's**  
death, burial, and resurrection  
for the sins of man.

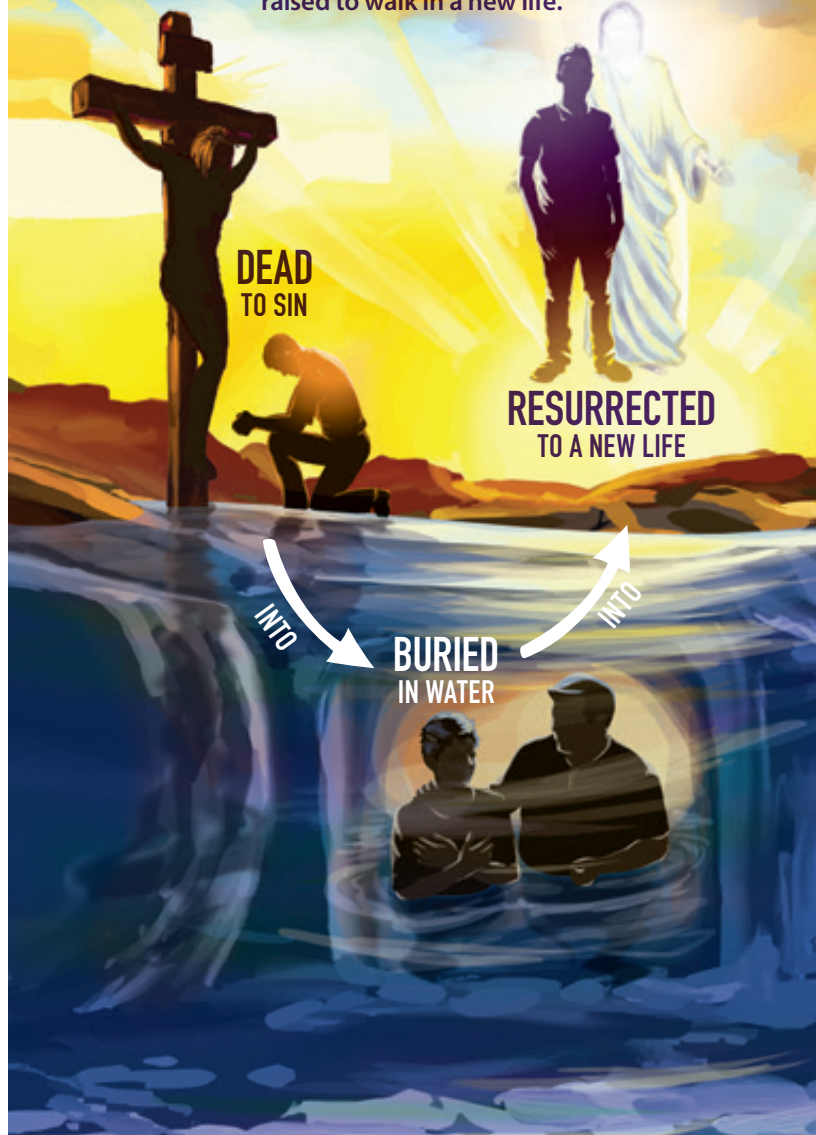


# THE GOSPEL RE-ENACTED

IN BAPTISM (OBEYING THE GOSPEL)

ROMANS 6:3–5

**In baptism,** we are buried in water  
for the remission of sins, and then  
raised to walk in a new life.



## The Inevitable and the Immovable

There are times in life when we find things in our way that we cannot move. Even after persistent, fervent prayer, the cup of suffering is brought to quivering lips, and we must drink of it—right down to the bitter dregs. Abraham Lincoln said, “Some troubles are like the stump an old farmer had in his field—too hard to uproot, too knotty to split, and too wet and soggy to burn.” When asked what to do in a spot like that,

he replied, “Well, I’d just plow around it.” Some situations are like that stump. They are there and cannot be changed and must be accepted. May God give us grace and strength to accept the inevitable and plow around the immovable.

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is  
... longsuffering ...”*

GALATIANS 5:22





## Get Rid of the *Silver Cup*

Leonardo Da Vinci was famous for many paintings; however, his most significant work was the “The Last Supper,” painted in a church building in Milan. This monumental fresco took four years to complete.

An interesting story is told as to why it took so long to finish. When da Vinci was almost finished, a friend commented on how incredibly moving the painting was—especially the silver cup on the table. “It was brilliant, beautiful!” he said. “My eyes were immediately drawn to it.” Da Vinci got so angry that he immediately painted over the cup, blotting it out. The focus of the painting was to be Jesus, not the cup. All attention had to be drawn to Him; anything that detracted from Him had to be removed.

What is the focus of our lives? We must remove anything that comes before Christ or hinders us from serving Him. Each day we are faced with many distractions. Literally hundreds of things vie for our attention. Is your life centered on Christ? Is He your focus?

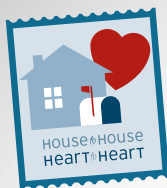
*“For to me, to live is Christ,  
and to die is gain.”*

PHILIPPIANS 1:21



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