



HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 27 NUMBER 3

THE ANGELS' FISHING TRIP

Read Matthew 13:47-50

Allen Webster

In the Parable of the Net, angels are pictured as casting a net into the earth to catch and bring people to judgment. Non-Christians and unfaithful Christians are cast away, and faithful Christians are kept in heaven (Matthew 13:47-50; 25:31-33).

As with the previous four parables in Matthew 13, the Parable of the Net has a twin in the Parable of the Tares. The Net emphasizes separating believers from unbelievers at the end. The Tares emphasize their coexistence in this world (Matthew 13:39-41; cf. John 5:28-29).

A comparison of the parables shows the following parallels (adapted from Coffman):

The field/sea is the world (Psalm 104:25).

Both kinds (good and bad) in the net shows the proximity of the saints and sinners in the kingdom.

The beach represents the end of time.

Growing till harvest/filled nets shows God's longsuffering (2 Peter 3:1-9).

Wheat/good fish are children of the kingdom.

Tares/bad fish are children of Satan.

Gathered/caught and sorting refers to the Judgment Day.

Reapers/fisherman (sorters) are angels (Matthew 24:31; 25:30-32; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 14:19; 15:5-16:21).

The gathering of good into barn/vessels represents salvation in heaven.

The casting away of the bad/cast into furnace is the wicked going into hell.

There is wailing/gnashing in both parables.

Consider an analysis of this story:

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A NET

Fishing on the Sea of Galilee usually involved nets. One type was with a small, one-man casting net called an *amphiblestron*. Peter and Andrew were casting an *amphiblestron* when Jesus called them to become "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18-19).

A second net was a large dragnet (sagene, seine) (cf. John 21:6). It required a team to operate and sometimes covered as much as half a square mile. It was pulled into a giant circle around the fish (Merrill C. Tenney, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*).

The angels will cast the net into the whole earth and harvest all humanity.

WHICH WAS CAST INTO THE SEA

This scene was familiar to all who lived near the sea. Fish was a staple food in Palestine (cf. Luke 9:16–17; 24:42; cf. Numbers 11:5).

Fishing is often used to represent spiritual truths. Satan baits the hook with attractive temptations (James 1:14). Disciples were fishers of men (cf. Mark 1:17).

AND GATHERED OF EVERY KIND

A net permitted nothing to escape, so all sorts of things besides desirable fish were caught—shells, weeds, starfish, objects dropped overboard, fish of every kind, and other sealife.

The judgment will be all-encompassing. As the gospel net will be without distinction (John 11:52), so good and bad will go to the judgment (Matthew 22:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

WHICH, WHEN IT WAS FULL, THEY DREW TO SHORE

Fisherman had to sort through their catch. Live fish were kept alive in containers to go to distant markets where they brought a better price. Those dead or hurt were placed in baskets and sold nearby.

The sitting down of the fishers to separate may indicate that judgment will be without haste. Sinners will be judged objectively and individually.

AND GATHERED THE GOOD INTO VESSELS

What the “barn” was in the parable of the tares (Matthew 13:30), the “vessels” are in this parable—heaven. In other places heaven is prefigured as a mansion (John 14:2), an everlasting home (Luke 16:9), and a city with foundations (Hebrews 11:10; 12:22; Revelation 3:12; 21:22). As there were only two kinds of fish—good and bad—so there are only two kinds of mature people, the righteous and the wicked. The bad (*sapra*) are those who produce evil fruit (Matthew 7:17) and/or do not produce good fruit (7:18).

THREW THE BAD AWAY . . . AND CAST THEM INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE

In those days, fishermen typically threw trash fish on the bank to die. In the parable, the wicked are burned. Jesus often warned of the horrors of hell. He spoke more of this than any prophet or apostle—even more than all other teachers combined (John MacArthur, *Parables: The Mysteries of God's Kingdom*). He said more about hell than He did about love.

A sampling of His warnings is sobering (Matthew 5:22, 29–30; 8:12; 11:23; 18:8–9; 23:33; Mark 9:43). Add His allusions to it, and it is truly frightening (Matthew 5:20; 7:13, 19, 23, 27; 10:28; 12:36; 13:40–42, 49–50; 21:43–44; 23:14–15; 24:51; 25:30,

46; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:9–10, 46; 16:23; John 5:29; 15:6).

When an unsaved person dies, his soul goes from the presence of God into Hades to await final judgment, as the rich man experienced (Luke 16:19–31). At the resurrection, the bodies of the lost will be raised, and those resurrected bodies will join the soul in going to Gehenna—the final resting place of the wicked (Matthew 10:28; cf. John 5:29; Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:11–15).

The torments of hell—including shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2)—will involve the torment of both body and soul. Torment will be experienced in varying degrees (Hebrews 10:28–29; Matthew 11:22–23; Luke 12:47–48). John Gerstner wrote, “Hell will have such severe degrees that a sinner, were he able, would give the whole world if his sins could be one less” (<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/2304/the-furnace-of-fire>).

The suffering will be unending, which is the most horrible concept of all (Matthew 25:46). John Bunyan wrote that when one has “been in hell so many thousand years as there are stars in the firmament or drops in the sea or sands on the seashore, yet thou has to lie there forever” (www.google.com/books/edition/The_Entire_Works_of_John_Bunyan). Hell has no fire extinguishers (Mark 9:44).

WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR

The sea also represents the world to be evangelized (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15).

As long as the fish are in the water, they have independence. Men move about within the sea as if they were forever free (Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15). The net may touch them occasionally, in a near-death experience or a loved one's death (cf. Ecclesiastes 7:2–3), and startle them. They quickly swim away, thinking that they have escaped. Once one is drawn to the beach at death, no changes are permitted (Revelation 22:11–14).

Jesus pleaded with men to avoid hell by following Him. He takes no pleasure in a wicked person's death (2 Peter 3:9). He wept over Jerusalem because the people would not come to be saved (Luke 19:41).

He still pleads—and no doubt He still weeps.





Quick Scriptures to Encourage

Grief. “I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).

Betrayal/Persecution. “We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:12).

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

Loneliness. “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me” (Psalm 27:10).

“May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all” (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the

door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

Tempted. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Guilt. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Fear. “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

Confusion. “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:6).

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

Death. “I am the resurrection, and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die” (John 11:25–26). —Author Unknown

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden.”

MATTHEW 11:28

The Devil’s Tool Sale

There is an old fable that says the devil once held a sale and offered all the tools of his trade to anyone who would pay their price.

They were spread out on the table and each one labeled—hatred, malice, envy, despair, sickness, sensuality—all well known to everyone. Off to one side lay a harmless looking wooden instrument marked “discouragement.” It was old and worn but was priced far above the rest.

When asked the reason why, the devil replied, “Because I can use this one so much more easily than the others. No one knows that it belongs to me. With it I can open doors that are tightly bolted against the others. Once I get inside, I can use any tool that suits me best.”

—From Bible Illustrator

“Do not fear or be discouraged.”

DEUTERONOMY 1:21

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

Understanding Differences

In a Harvard study of several hundred preschoolers, researchers discovered an interesting phenomenon. As they recorded children's playground conversation, they realized that the sounds coming from little girls' mouths were recognizable words.

However, only sixty percent of little boys' sounds were words. The other forty percent were yells and sound effects like "Vrrroooooom!" "Aaaaagh!!" and "Toot, toot!" This difference persists into adulthood.

Communication experts say the average wife says she needs to spend forty-five minutes to an hour each day in meaningful conversation with her husband. What does the husband sitting next to her say? Fifteen to twenty minutes—once or twice a week! Communication is good. Communication is needed. —Author Unknown

*"Manoah said to his wife . . .
His wife said to him . . ."*

JUDGES 13:22-23



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.



Little Children

God gave us some little children,
To lead and guide for a while,
And the pleasures of this noble task,
Replaced the emptiness of the past.

We taught these children to love and pray,
And to be useful in every good way,
And by example of our life,
We led them in paths of right.

Hand in hand we traveled on
In service to Him who is on His throne,
Guided day by day with His written word,
And not by opinion which we often heard.

Riches of this world were not ours to share,
But day by day we knelt in prayer,
We gave thanks to God on high,
As our fleeting days went by.

And when our life on earth is o'er,
Our soul shall fly to the eternal shore;
But our influence we ever trust,
Will be in these children God gave to us.

—Author Unknown

*"Children are a heritage
from the Lord: the fruit of the
womb is a reward."*

PSALM 127:3

Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism,
they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility,
they learn to fight.

If children live with ridicule,
they learn to be shy.

If children live with shame,
they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with tolerance,
they learn to be patient.

If children live with encouragement,
they learn confidence.

If children live with praise,
they learn to appreciate.

If children live with fairness,
they learn justice.

If children live with security,
they learn to have faith.

If children live with approval,
they learn to like themselves.

If children live with acceptance and
friendship, they learn to find love in
the world. —Dorothy Law Nolte

*"Bring them up in the training
and admonition of the Lord."*

EPHESIANS 6:4

Just for Fun | The Ten Plagues

Exodus 7-12

Can you number
the plagues in the
right order?



Lord, Help Me to Fly



A man found a butterfly chrysalis. A small opening appeared, and he watched off and on for several hours as the butterfly struggled to force its body through that little hole.

When it seemed to stop making any progress, he decided to help the butterfly. He took scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the chrysalis. The butterfly emerged easily, but it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

As the man continued to watch, he expected to see the wings expand and the body contract to normal proportions. Neither happened. The butterfly crawled around with a swollen body and shriveled wings and was never able to fly.

What the man in his kindness did not understand was that the struggle to exit

the restricting chrysalis was God's way of forcing fluid from the butterfly's body into its wings so it would be ready to fly once it achieved freedom from the chrysalis.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in life. If God allowed us to go through life without obstacles, we would not be as strong as we could have been. It might cripple us so that we could never fly.

So our prayers might need to change.

I asked for strength, and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for wisdom, and God gave me problems to solve.

I asked for prosperity, and God gave me brains and brawn to work.

I asked for courage, and God gave me danger to overcome.

I asked for love, and God gave me troubled people to help.

I asked for favors, and God gave me opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted but gained everything I needed.

Many people never get anywhere in life because when opportunity knocks, they are out in the back yard looking for four-leaf clovers. —*Thoughts for Today to Brighten Your Day*,

Glenn, Mercedes and Lauren Hitchcock

"As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good."

GENESIS 50:20

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

Bible Quiz

VOLUME 27:3

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Types of Christ—The Tabernacle and the Church of Christ" 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. 27:1 Starts with the letter L: 1. Laban (Genesis 29:16); 2. Lamech (Genesis 4:23–24); 3. Lions (Daniel 6:16); 4. laughed (Genesis 18:12); 5. Lazarus (Luke 16:24); 6. Love (1 Corinthians 13:7); 7. Life (John 14:6); 8. Lamentations (1:1); 9. Living (John 4:10); 10. Live (Ezekiel 37:3); 11. Levi (Genesis 29:34); 12. Lot (Genesis 14:12); 13. Leah (Genesis 29:16–17); 14. Lilies (Luke 12:27); 15. Lazarus (John 11:39); 16. Luke (Luke 1:1); 17. Lydia (Acts 16:11–15); 18. Lois (2 Timothy 1:5); 19. Lake (Revelation 21:8); 20. Lice (Exodus 8:17–18); 21. Levities (Numbers 1:47).

V. 27:2 Starts with the letter "N": 1. Naaman (2 Kings 5:1–14); 2. Nabal (1 Samuel 25:1–11); 3. Naboth (1 Kings 21:1–4); 4. Nadab (Leviticus 10:1–7); 5. Nahum (Nahum 1:1); 6. Nails (John 20:25); 7. Nain (Luke 7:11–17); 8. Naomi (Ruth 1:11–19); 9. Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1–15); 10. Nathanael (John 1:47); 11. Nazareth (Luke 2:39–51); 12. Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:8–10); 13. Needle (Matthew 19:24); 14. Neglect (Hebrews 2:3); 15. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1 + 6:15); 16. Nehushtan (2 Kings 18:4); 17. Neighbor (Matthew 22:39); 18. Net (Proverbs 29:5); 19. Never (Hebrews 13:5); 20. New (John 13:34); 21. Nicodemus (John 3:1–12); 22. Night (Revelation 22:5); 23. Nimrod (Genesis 10:6–9); 24. Nineveh (Jonah 1:1–2+3:5–9).

Starts with the Letter U

Directions: Find answers in the following passages: Genesis 11:31; 19:3; 29:10; Deuteronomy 14:7–8; 23:19; 2 Samuel 6:7; 11:3; 2 Kings 16:10–16; Job 1:1; Proverbs 3:5; Ecclesiastes 1:9; Jeremiah 26:23; Daniel 5:25; Acts 17:23; Romans 16:9; 2 Corinthians 6:14; James 1:8, 27. Questions are taken from NKJV.

1. Laban was Jacob's father-in-law and also his _____.
2. Animals that did not both chew cud and had cloven hooves were _____.
3. Job was from _____.
4. _____ was the high priest in Ahaz's time.
5. Proverbs encourages trust in the Lord, and not leaning on one's own _____.
6. Abram moved from _____ to Canaan.
7. Lot baked _____ bread for the angels who visited his home.
8. Paul saluted _____ as a helper in Christ.
9. Paul warned believers not to be _____ yoked with _____.
10. Bathsheba was the wife of _____.
11. When preaching in Athens, Paul found an altar with the inscription: "To the _____ God."
12. Christians should practice pure and _____ religion before God by visiting orphans and widows and keeping _____ from the world.
13. Solomon said there is nothing new where? _____
14. _____ was killed after touching the Ark of the Covenant when the oxen stumbled.
15. The practice of charging interest on loans was condemned in the Old Testament. _____ (κην).
16. James writes that a double-minded man is _____ in all his ways.
17. Which ally of Jeremiah did Jehoiakim hunt down in Egypt and kill with a sword? _____
18. The hand wrote on the wall: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, _____."

They Cannot Take What Is Written in Your Heart

Chinese Christians imprisoned for their faith are memorizing Scripture passages smuggled to them on small pieces of paper because prison guards “cannot take what is hidden in your heart,” one former prisoner revealed.

A missionary wrote of an experience he had on a recent trip to China. Twenty-two Christians from the Hunan Province took a 13-hour train ride to attend sessions held at a 700-square-foot hotel room. Out of the 22 Christians present, 18 had been imprisoned for their faith.

“If we get caught what will happen to me?” the missionary asked.

“You will get deported in 24 hours, and we will go to prison for three years,” the Christians responded.

The preacher had only 15 Bibles, so seven people went without. When he said, “Turn to 2 Peter 1,” one lady handed hers to the person next to her. He soon realized why: she had memorized the whole book.

He went to her at a break and said, “You recited the whole chapter.” She replied, “In prison, you have much time.”

“Do they not confiscate the Bible?” he asked. She said all Christian material is confiscated, but people smuggle in Scripture written on paper.

“That is why we memorize it as fast as we can because even though they can take the paper away, they cannot take what is hidden in your heart,” she explained.

Following the training sessions, one man asked the missionary, “Could you pray that one day we would be like you?”

“I will not do that,” he replied. “You rode a train 13 hours to get here. In my country, if you have to drive more than an hour, people will not come.”

“You sat on a wooden floor for three days. In my country, if people have to sit for more than 40 minutes, they leave. In my country, if it is not padded pews and air conditioning, people will not come back.”

“In my country, we have an average of two Bibles per family, but we do not read them. You hardly have any Bibles, and you memorize verses from paper.”

“I will not pray that you become like us. I will pray that we become like you.”

To stunt the rapid growth of Christianity, authorities throughout China have shut down churches and arrested Christians for worshiping without government approval.

What makes the underground church in China unstoppable? A group of people that actually embrace suffering cannot be stopped. It is a lot easier to come somewhere and be fed than to love others as much as Christ loved us. —Author Unknown

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.”

HEBREWS 11:25



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

Recommended Resource



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The Half Has Never Been Told



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The First Christian in Europe



Picking God's Pocket

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VOLUME 27:3



Infographic coming soon

What Jesus Never Did

In infancy He startled a king (Matthew 2:1–3); in boyhood He puzzled the doctors (Luke 2:41–50); in manhood He ruled the seas (Mark 4:35–39).

He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charges for His services (Matthew 8:16–17; 12:14–15; Luke 6:16–18).

He never wrote a book, yet many thousands of books have been written about Him (cf. John 21:24–25).

He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished more song themes than all the songwriters combined (cf. 2 Chronicles 20:21; Psalm 21:12–13).

He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 19:9–11; Romans 1:7–9). He never practiced medicine, yet He has healed more broken hearts than doctors have broken bodies (Psalm 147:2–4).

He never marshalled an army, drafted a soldier, or fired a gun, yet no leader ever commanded so great a multitude of volunteers (Matthew 11:28).

Great men have come and gone, yet He lives on (Hebrews 7:25). Herod could not kill Him (Matthew 2:13–16), Satan could not seduce Him (Matthew 4:1–11), and the grave could not hold Him (Matthew 28:6).

Many have faltered, failed, and faded away, but not Jesus. He is the friend of sinners (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34).

—Author Unknown

“He has done all things well.”

MARK 7:37





Lessons from NOAH'S ARK

One: Do not miss the boat. “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Two: Remember that we are all in the same boat. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

Three: Plan ahead. It was not raining when Noah built the ark (Ephesians 5:16).

Four: Stay fit. When you are old, someone may ask you to do something big. “I discipline my body . . . lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:26–27).

Five: Do not listen to critics; get on with the job that needs to be done. “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Six: Build on high ground. No other foundation can anyone lay than what is laid, which is Jesus (1 Corinthians 3:10–11).

Seven: Travel in pairs. Who shall separate us from Christ’s love? (Romans 8:35–37).

Eight: Speed is not always an advantage. Both snails and cheetahs made it on board. “Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19).

Nine: When you are stressed, float awhile. “Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1:2–3).

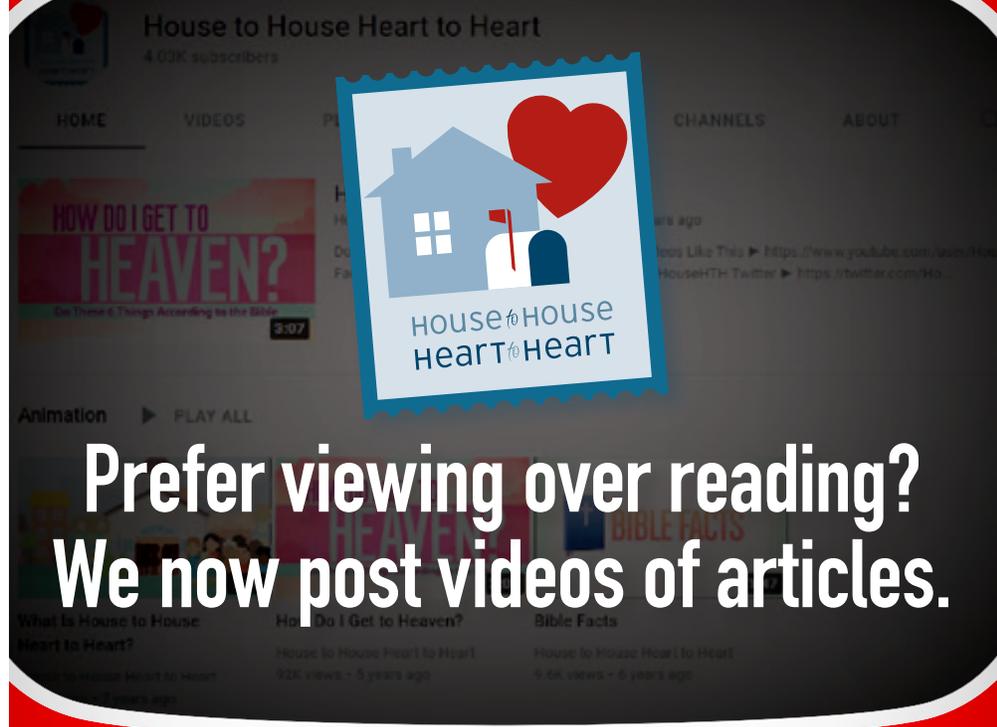
Ten: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the *Titanic* was built by professionals (1 Corinthians 1:20).

Eleven: No matter the storm, with God there is always a rainbow (Philippians 4:13).

—Thoughts for Today to Brighten Your Day,
Glenn, Mercedes and Lauren Hitchcock



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