

THE SCRIPTURES IN A YEAR

With daily translations from the original languages and reflections

by Colin Symes

Every follower of Jesus needs an overview of the Story of God presented in the Holy Bible and guided by the Holy Spirit. What follows is a record of my own journey through the year, put in a format to be shared with others. I have followed the One Year Bible Plan of Tyndale House Publishers Inc (accessed at www.oneyearbibleonline.com) which leads the reader through a daily portion of the Old Testament, New Testament, then a Psalm and a Proverb. (This means that the book of Psalms is covered twice over in the year.)

Each day, I have translated and commented on a verse from the readings. Some days have more than one such translation, offered as an alternative. I would encourage you as you read to make your own notes in a journal to help your own reflections.

If you are reading from the computer file given, the quickest way to find the day's date is to press Ctrl+F (find) and enter the day sought in full (eg. September 17) This will take you to the readings.

The verses quoted are given in the original languages (Hebrew, Greek and some Aramaic) with a transliteration in Roman alphabet to enable the reader to attempt to capture the original sound of the Scripture. In these transliterations, the accent shows where word stress falls, as a guide. Readers might attempt these as a way of becoming more familiar with the text as it was first given.

To read the Bible in a year is a big endeavour; if the reader finds a day dropped, my own counsel would be to ignore the dates and pick up from the last day of reading, even if that means not being in sync with the calendar. In that way, whether it takes a year, two years or four, you will be sure of having read the whole Scripture through.

(The readings are set for the year 2017, which is an ordinary year; there are three hundred and sixty five reading divisions, therefore.)

May the Lord who gave these words to His people guide you in their reading and reflection, and may they dwell in your heart and your mouth richly all the days of your life.

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Edinburgh
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January 1 2017 Day 1: readings today; Genesis 1:1-2:25 Matthew 1:1-2:12 Psalm 1:1-6 Proverbs 1:1-6

וְהָאֵרֶץ חַיָּתָה תְּהוֹ וְבַהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם
Ve-ha-àretz hayetàh tòhu va-vòhu, ve-chòshekh al-pnèy tehòm; ve-Rùach Elohim
merachèphet al-pnèy ha-mayìm.

And the earth was a chaotic vacuum, in the darkness of space; but the Spirit of God was brooding over the surface of this primeval ocean.

Genesis 1.2/ בראשית א"ב

A reflection on Genesis 1.2 ‘In the beginning, before anything in the universe was there, God by His Spirit was brooding over the ocean of space. And in the moment when He says ‘Light!’, the energy of a billion suns explodes into being and His life is released in the creativity which has brought us to today, to the start of a new year, in the ongoing unfolding of His unlimited creation-story.’

καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν

Kai elthòndes ees teen ikìan ìdhon to paidhìon metà Mariàs tees meetròs avtòu, kai pesòndes, prosekýneesan avtò, kai anìxandes tous thesavrouòs avtòn prosènenkan avtò dhòra, chrysòn kai libhanon kai smýrnan

And coming into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they worshipped Him, and opening their treasures they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh

Matthew/Μαθθαιον 2.11

A reflection on Matthew 2.11 ‘The star moves to bring the wise men to the house where Jesus now is, with his parents. They offer him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh, royal treasures. Although there are three gifts, it cannot be assumed, however, that there are three men. It is also clearly stated by Matthew that they worship Him, bowing down. For Matthew, A Jew, worship and obeisance like this are due only to God.’

וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׂתוּל עַל-פְּלִגְי-מַיִם
אֲשֶׁר פְּרִיּוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ-וְנֹעְלָהוּ לֹא-יִבּוֹל וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ
Ve-hayàh ke-ètz shatùl al-palgèy màyim, ashèr piryò yittèn be-ittò ve-alèyhu lo yibbòl, ve-khol asher ya’asèh yatzliach.

And he will be like a tree planted beside irrigation-channels of water, producing fruit in season, with leaves that do not wither; in everything he does, he flourishes.

Psalms 1.3/ תהלים א"ג

A reflection on Psalm 1.3 : The water-courses referred to by the Singer here are channels (palgèy mayìm) dug in a tended garden to ensure a constant supply of water, even through dry seasons ; in the light of such care, the person whose delight is in the Lord’s formation, His Torah, will find His life flourishing, lived to the full, whether in the midst of joy or pain.

מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה בֶן-דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Mishlèy Shlomò bhen David, mèlekh Yisra’èl

The life-sayings of Solomon, son of David, King of Israel.

Proverbs 1.1/ משלי א"א

A reflection on Proverbs 1.1 ‘What we call ‘proverbs’ are actually originally sayings to live by, the wisdom of a way of life which is rooted in taking God seriously and acting on what they teach. They are not a compendium of aphorisms to be put on a shelf for reference purposes; they are the road-signs on the faith-filled journey, the ignoring of which will lead to disaster.’

January 2 2017 Day 2: readings today; Genesis 3:1-4:26 Matthew 2:13-3:6 Psalm 2:1-12 Proverbs 1:7-9

וַיֵּצֵא קַיִן מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ-נוֹד קְדִמַּת-עֵדֶן

Va-yetzè Qàyin mi-liphnèy Adonài va-yeshèbh be-èretz Nod, qidmàt Èden

And Cain went away from the face of the Lord to live in the land of Nod (Wandering), east of Eden.

Genesis 4.16/ בראשית ד"טז

A reflection on Genesis 4.16 : Like his father and mother, and like mankind generally, Cain moves away from the presence of God, which in Hebrew is the same word as ‘face’. (cf. Genesis 3.8, where Adam and Eve hide from the face of God.) He goes into a land of wandering, not seeing that God has not rejected, but rather protected him. In reality, we are never out of view of the Lord, even when we try to be. Within sight of His presence-face is always the safest place.

καὶ λέγων· μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν·

Kai lègon, ‘Metanoèete; èngike gar ee bhasilèia ton ouranòn.’

And he (John the Immerser) was saying, ‘Get your mind transformed, for the reign of heaven is arriving!’

Matthew/Μαθθαιον 3.2

A reflection on Matthew 3.2 ‘Matthew, a Jew writing to Jews, seems to prefer not to write the term ‘reign of God’ as Mark and Luke do, to avoid contention about the writing of God’s name. But Immerser John’s message is clearly the same ; God is King, and His personal arrival is imminent. This necessitates not just a saying ‘sorry’, which is too often all ‘repentance’ has become, but a whole process of ‘trans-ideation’, a transformed way of life, giving up the empty ways of the republic of man, from now on reckoning everything in life to be done with an eye to the close presence of the King Himself, since the reign of God is always close-up and personal, not faraway and abstract.’

שְׁמַע בְּנִי מוֹסֵר אָבִיךָ וְאַל-תִּטּוֹשׁ תּוֹרַת אִמְךָ

Shemà benì musàr abhìkha, ve-àl tittòsh toràt immèkha.

Listen, my son, to the direction of your father and do not reject the instruction of your mother.

Proverbs 1.8/ משלי א"ח

A reflection on Proverbs 1.8 ‘As well as listening to the direction of the father, the son is called upon not to reject the ‘torah’ of his mother. The word ‘torah’ in Hebrew is basic, fundamental. It is as formative to our beings as gravity, and this is why ‘torah’ cannot be translated simply as ‘law’. It is the parent’s impartation to the child, the mother’s loving repetition, instilling life and character into her beloved. No wonder the Psalmist expresses in so many places a love for the ‘Torah of the Lord’.

January 3 2017 Day 3: reading today; Genesis 5:1-7:24, Matthew 3:7-4:11, Psalm 3:1-8, Proverbs 1:10-19

וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ הַנּוֹרָא אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֵינּוּ כִּי-לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים

Va-yit-halèq Chanòkh et-Elohìm, ve-eynèynu, ki laqàch otò Elohìm

And Enoch walked with God, then was no more, for God took him.

Genesis 5.24/ בראשית ה"כד

A reflection on Genesis 5.24 ‘Much has been made of the character of Enoch from this one verse in Genesis; it has been interpreted to mean that Enoch did not die, but was taken to be with God, or ‘translated’. This has led to Jewish and Christian mystics seeing him as a bridge between earth and heaven; a book containing legends of his visits to heaven is included in the Deuterocanonical works. Whatever we say of Enoch, the key to his life is that he ‘walked with God’ remarkably closely, being an early model for intimate relationship with the Creator and lover of our souls.’ (We find later that Noah walks the same way with God in Gen. 6.9.)

ὁ δὲ Ἰωάννης διεκώλυεν αὐτὸν λέγων· ἐγὼ χρειάν ἔχω ὑπὸ σοῦ βαπτισθῆναι, καὶ σὺ ἔρχῃ πρὸς με; ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπε πρὸς αὐτόν· ἄφες ἄρτι· οὕτω γὰρ πρέπον ἐστὶν ἡμῖν πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην. τότε ἀφίησιν αὐτόν·

O dhe Yoànees dhiekòlyen avtòn lègon, ‘Egò chrèian ècho ypò sou bhaptisthèenai, kai see èrchee pros me?’ Apokrithèes dhe o Yeesòus èepe pros avtòn, ‘Àphes àrti; òuto gar prèpon estìn eemin pleeròsai pàsan dhikaiosýneen.’ Tòte aphìeesin avtòn.’

But John refused him and said, ‘I need you to be immersing me in water, but you’re coming to me instead?’ Then Jesus responded and said to him, ‘Let it be this way for now, because this is what needs to happen for us to do it absolutely right.’ So he let Him.

Matthew/Μαθθαιου 3.14,15

A reflection on Matthew 3.14,15 ‘Although John rightly sees that Jesus has no need of his immersion in the Jordan, Jesus knows that He cannot bypass this simple step of obedience to His Father. All who claim to follow Jesus now have no excuse for not getting wet with Him in that water, since He humbled Himself so pointedly to set the benchmark for all who would be apprentices of His. No wonder His Father opens the windows of heaven and celebrates His Son, as the Spirit of God equips Him for His matchless ministry ahead.’

January 4 2017 Day 4: readings today; Genesis 8:1-10:32, Matthew 4:12-25, Psalm 4:1-8, Proverbs 1:20-23

אֶת-קִשְׁתִּי נִתַּתִּי בְּעָנָן וְהִיְתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ

Et-qashtì natatì be-anàn ve-hayetàh le-òt berit beynì u-vèyn ha-àretz

My war-bow I will leave in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the irrevocable bond between me and the earth.

Genesis 9.13/ בראשית יג"ט

A reflection on Genesis 9.13 : Covenant and the presence-face of God go together in Scripture. Man has sought since Adam to run from the face of God, but God pursues. In Noah, God starts again, and binds Himself to mankind with a self-obligating bond of covenant, marked by the sign of His war-bow being laid down in the clouds. God is determined to walk with mankind, despite His creature’s waywardness.

Καὶ περιῆγεν ὅλην τὴν Γαλιλαίαν ὁ Ἰησοῦς διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κηρύσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν ἐν τῷ λαῷ.

Kai perièeyen òleen teen Galilàian o Eesòus dhidhàskon en tais synagogàis avtòn kai keerýson to evangèlion tees vasilèias kai therapèvon pàsan nòson kai pàsan malakian en to laò.

And Jesus progressed through all the Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and declaring the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Matthew/Μαθθαιον 4.23

A reflection on Matthew 4.23 ‘Jesus begins to preach a message that the Kingdom of heaven (Greek ee bhasileía ton ouranón) is near. It is key to understand that the word ‘kingdom’ is not referring to a state or geographical location, nor yet to a system of government or regime, but to a personal reign of the King of Heaven (Greek o bhasilévs ton ouranón); another way of translating the word would be the kingship of heaven or the reign of heaven. We can never separate the Kingdom from the King.’

בְּשָׁלוֹם יִחַדּוּ אֶשְׁכְּבָה וְאִישָׁן כִּי-אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְּד לְבַטַח תּוֹשִׁיבֵנִי

Be-shalòm yachdàv eshkebhàh ve-ishèn, ki attàh Adonài le-bhadàd la-bhètach toshibhèyni

I will both lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell secure.

Psalms 4.8/תהילים ד"ח

A reflection on Psalm 4.8 ‘It is possible to go to bed but not sleep. Here, the Singer, even in the midst of his challenges from opponents is able to lie down and go to sleep, only because he knows that his security is anchored not in his circumstances but in the Lord his Maker.

Elsewhere, the Singer says, ‘He gives His loved ones sleep.’ (Ps.127.2)

January 5 2017 Day 5: readings today; Genesis 11:1-13:4, Matthew 5:1-26, Psalm 5:1-12, Proverbs 1:24-28

וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדַּלְךָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְּרַכָּה

Ve-e’es-khà le-gòy gadòl, va-abharèkhekha va-agadlàh shmèkha veh-yèh berakhàh

And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great and you will be a blessing.

Genesis 12.2/ בראשית יב"ב

A reflection on Gen.12.2 ‘While Terah, Abram’s father, set out for Canaan but stopped short in Haran, Abram continues the journey and receives the blessing. It is Abram who is called, Abram who trusts the promise, and Abram who takes God at His word. Travelling with God takes our whole life long; parting ways with Him halfway through does not lead to full blessing. It is Abram who sees God on arrival in Canaan, and through him the blessing of God cascades down through the generations, on through Jesus the Messiah to us who live in the dawning of the Today of the Kingdom.’

Ἔμεῖς ἐστε τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῇ, ἐν τίνι ἀλισθήσεται; εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχύει ἔτι εἰ μὴ βληθῆναι ἔξω καὶ καταπατεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Ymìs-este to àlas tees yees; eàn dhe to àlas morànthee, en tini alisthèsetai? Ees oudhèn ischýi èti mee bhleethèenai èxo kai katapatisthai ypò ton anthròpon.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt were ever to lose its flavour, how could it re-salted? It would be worthless other than for throwing out to be walked on by people.

Matthew/Μαθθαιον 5.13

A reflection on Matthew 5.13 'It seems there was a type of rock-salt used in Jesus' day, which, when exposed to the weather, degraded to the extent that it lost flavour, and was then used like grit on wet paving. Whether Jesus is speaking of an actual or a hypothetical de-salting, what He is saying is that there is in His people a preservative, disinfectant and seasoning quality which should be in solution in the world in which we live. Certainly salt kept in a salt-cellar is going to do no good to anyone, and might as well not be there. The challenge to us is to be those who, by our lives, season, heal and sustain others, letting Jesus be tasted and experienced through us in a world bland and septic without Him.'

יהוה--בִּקְרָתְךָ תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי בִּקְרָתְךָ לְךָ וְאַצְפֶּה

Adonài, bòqer tishmà qoli; bòqer e'eràkh lekhà va-atzappèh
Lord, in the morning You will hear my voice; in the morning I will address myself to You and look out for You.

Psalm 5.3/תהילים ה"ד

A reflection on Psalm 5.3 'At the start of each new day, the Jew opens his eyes and says, 'I give thanks to you, Living and Eternal King, that You have restored my breath to me in Your mercy; great is Your faithfulness.' This prayer, known as 'modeh ani' in Hebrew, sets the one praying on a path of worship for the day ahead. For those of us who know Messiah, we should be taking that same path with them.'

January 6 2017 Day 6: reading today; Genesis 13:5-15:21, Matthew 5:27-48, Psalm 6:1-10, Proverbs 1:29-33

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת-אַבְרָם--בְּרִית לֵאמֹר לְזַרְעֲךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת מִנְהַר מִצְרַיִם עַד-הַנְּהַר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר-פָּרָת

Ba-yòm ha-hù karàt Adonài et-Abhràm berit, lemòr, 'Le-zarakhà natatì et-ha-àretz ha-zòt, mi-nàhar Mitzràim ad ha-nàhar ha-gadòl, ha-neràh Peràt.'

That day, the Lord cut a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.'

Genesis 15.18/בראשית ט"ח

A reflection on Genesis 15.18 'From this decisive moment in history comes the commitment of the Lord God to enter into person-to-person relationship with mankind, through Abraham His worshipper. In this act of covenant, which the Hebrew language describes as 'cut' because of the sacrifice it entails, the Lord commits Himself irrevocably to the blessing, not only of Abraham's physical descendants, but to the blessing of the whole earth, and of whomever will do what Abraham did and trust outrageously in His promise. Since that day, God is tied to us in covenant-bonded grace (in Hebrew, 'chesed'), which never fails and finds its ultimate expression in the self-sacrifice of Jesus, the Messiah.'

ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι, ὥσπερ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τέλειός ἐστιν.

Èsesthe oon ymèes tèlee-ee, òsper o patèr ymòn o en tìs ouranìs tèleiòs estin.

לכן היו שלמים כאשר אביכם שבשמים שלם הוא

Lakhèn heyù shlemìm ka-ashèr abhikhèm she-ba-shamàyim shallèm hu.

So be complete, full of integrity as your Father in heaven is whole and full of integrity.

Matthew 5.48/Μαθθαιου 5.48

A reflection on Matthew 5.48 'As Jesus brings to a close the manward aspect of His first teaching on the mountain, He calls His apprentices to wholeness, to full integrity, acting from love and not selfish motives. Those who name themselves followers of this Jesus should be known as those who have no hidden agenda, but are all they purport to be, as God is Himself.

January 7 2017 Day 7: Readings Genesis 16:1-18:15, Matthew 6:1-24, Psalm 7:1-17, Proverbs 2:1-5

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלֵי מַמְרֵא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פְּתַח-הָאֵהָל כְּחַם הַיּוֹם
וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרַץ לִקְרַאתָם מִפְּתַח הָאֵהָל
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ אַרְצָה

Va-ya-erà elàyv Adonài be-Elonèy Mamrè, ve-hù yoshèbh pètach ha-ohèl ke-chòm ha-yòm.
Va-yissà eynàyv va-yàr, ve-hinèh, sheloshàh anashìm nitzabhìm alàyv, va-yàr va-yaràtz li-
qratàm mi-pètach ha-ohèl, va-yishtachù artzàh.

Then the LORD made Himself visible to him (Abraham) at Mamre Oaks, while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the hottest part of the day. As he looked up, there they were - three men standing beside him; seeing them, he ran to greet them from his tent-door, prostrating himself on the ground.

Genesis 18.1-2/ בראשית יח"א ב

A reflection on Genesis 18.1-2. 'Abraham hosts the LORD Himself in the covenant-sealing meal he is about to offer. While we cannot read into the text the doctrine of Trinity, there is a plurality in the LORD which is seen in His coming to Abraham in three visitors. It reminds us of God's addressing Himself as 'us' in Genesis 1. To run was undignified for an elderly man of Abraham's stature. But Abraham has no thought to his own image; here is the Maker of heaven and earth come to his tent, and he runs and bows his body before Him in abandonment and service.'

Οὕτως οὖν προσεύχεσθε ὑμεῖς· Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου· ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς·

Oùtos oun prosèvchesthe ymèes; Pàter eemòn, o en tis ouranìs, ayiasthèeto to ònomà-sou, elthèto ee bhasilèia sou, yeneethèeto to thèleemà-sou, os en ouranò, kai epì tees yees.

So pray like this; Our Father in heaven, let Your name be unrivalled, let Your reign come, let Your desire be fulfilled, as in heaven, so on the earth.

Matthew/Μαθθαιου 6.9,10

A reflection on Matthew 6.9,10 'In the opening words of the prayer Jesus teaches His apprentice-followers, there are three connected requests; may Your Name be unrivalled, may Your (personal) reign come, may Your desire be fulfilled as in heaven, so on earth. The word 'hallowed' in our oft-repeated saying of the Lord's prayer has almost lost its meaning, but it is perhaps the key to the following two. For His reign to come and His desire to be fulfilled, He must be without rival in our hearts and in the world. To be holy is to be matchless, to be without equal or competition. This is what Jesus invites us to call on our Father to be to us, His people.'

January 8 2017 Day 8: readings today; Genesis 18:16-19:38, Matthew 6:25-7:14, Psalm 8:1-9, Proverbs 2:6-15

כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצנה את-בניו ואת-ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך יהוה לעשות צדקה ומשפט--למען הביא יהוה על-אברהם את אשר-דבר עליו

Ki yadà'ti lema-àn ashèr yetzavvèh et-banàyv ve-et beytò acharàyv ve-shamrù dèrech Adonài la'asòt tzedaqàh u-mishpàt, lema-àn habhì Adonài al-Abhrahàm et-ashèr dibbèr alàyv.

For I have established relationship with him (Abraham) because he is going to direct his children and his household in keeping to the Lord's way, maintaining integrity and putting things right and so the Lord will bring upon Abraham just what He has said.'

Genesis 18.19/ בראשית יח"ט

A reflection on Genesis 18.19 'The Lord has made covenant with Abraham and is intent on his blessing. He knows that He has no rival in Abraham's life and family, and that they will maintain integrity and set to rights what is threatened with evil. This word in Hebrew is 'mishpat', sometimes translated 'justice' and sometimes 'judgement'. But it is not essentially forensic, but redemptive; it is the right-wising of things which tend otherwise to chaos. It is an action to rescue, which is why the later deliverers of Israel are called 'judges', or 'shophtim' in the Hebrew.'

Πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἂν θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτω καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς· οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται.

Pànta ouv òsa an thèleete ìna piòsin ymìn i ànthropi, òuto kai ymèes pièete avtìs; òutos gàr-estin o nòmos kai i prophètai.

So whatever you want people to do for you, do that also for them; for this is the sum of God's instruction and of the prophets.

Matthew/Μαθθαιον 7.12

A reflection on Matthew 7.12: 'Jesus points to self-giving love as being the core of all of God's *Torah* instruction, as well as the heart of what the prophets have called Israel to. However we want to be treated by others (which universally means in a kind and loving way) we are to show that to all those with whom we come into contact.'

January 9 2017 Day 9: readings today; Genesis 20:1-22:24, Matthew 7:15-29, Psalm 9:1-12, Proverbs 2:16-22

ויאמר אברהם אל-נעריו שבו-לכם פה עם-החמור ואני והנער נלכה עד-כה ונשתחוו ונשובה אליכם

Va-yòmer Abhrahàm el-ne-aràyv, 'Shevù lakhèm poh im ha-chamòr, va-anì ve-ha-na'àr nelkhàh ad-kòh ve-nishtachavèh, ve-nashubhàh alèykhem.'

And Abraham said to his servants, 'Remain here with the donkey, while the boy and I go further to worship, and then we'll return to you.'

Genesis 22.5/ בראשית כב"ה

A reflection on Genesis 22.5. 'This is the first occurrence of the word 'worship' in the Scriptures, and it comes in the context of a costly learning experience for both Abraham and Isaac. God will not allow anything, even a child of promise, to become an idol to Abraham, and God calls for Him to lay down His son on the altar. For Isaac, it was a terrifying experience, but one from which God saved him, leading him to know God as 'the Fear of Isaac.' When Abraham and Isaac return, it is as if they have been through death and resurrection together. The close encounter with God in true worship always costs us.'

Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ἀκούει μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτοὺς, ὁμοιώσω αὐτὸν ἀνδρὶ φρονίμῳ, ὅστις ὠκοδόμησε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν·
Pas oun ὅstis akdúi mou tous lōgous tōutous kai peei avtous, omiōso avtōn andrī phronimo, ὅstis okodhōmeese teen ikian avtōu epī teen pētran.
So everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into action is like an intelligent man who built his house on the rock.
Matthew/Μαθθαιου 7.24

A reflection on Matthew 7.24 ‘There is often a disjoin between what we hear God say and what we do. Jesus is saying clearly that wisdom is about action, not about what we know in our heads. The story He goes on to tell of the intelligent man whose house withstands storms because it is based on rock is a call to us to act in line with His teaching, not just to say we have it in our mental database to access when we see fit. The foolish may have the knowledge, but it is their misguided action which eventually brings down their structures.’

January 10 2017 Day 10: readings today; Genesis 23:1-24:51, Matthew 8:1-17, Psalm 9:13-20, Proverbs 3:1-6

וַיִּקְדּוּ הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חֶסֶדוֹ וְאֱמֻנתוֹ מִעַם אֲדֹנָי אֲנֹכִי בַדֶּרֶךְ נַחֲנִי יְהוָה בֵּית אָחִי אֲדֹנָי
Va-yiqqōd ha-ish, ve-yishtachavù l’Adonài, va-yomèr, ‘Barùkh Adonài Elohèy adonì, Abhrahàm, ashèr lo-azàbh chasdò va-amitò me-im adonì; anokhì ba-dèrekh, nachanì Adonài beyt achèy adonì.’

And the man bowed himself down and prostrated himself before the LORD, saying ‘Blessed be the LORD God of my master, Abraham, who has not abandoned His covenant-bonded grace and His steadfastness to my master; my journeying has been directed by the LORD right to the house of my master’s relatives.’

Genesis 24.26,27/ בראשית כד" כו כז

A reflection on Genesis 24.26-27. ‘The servant of Abraham is overwhelmed by his encounter with the provision of God in answer to his very specific prayer for a wife for Isaac, and bows in worship before the Lord in response to His covenant-bonded grace and steadfastness shown toward him. In this chapter we find the first occurrence in the Scripture of the deep word, *chesed*, applied to God’s self-sacrificial, self-obliging grace which ultimately is shown in His coming in Jesus Christ to rescue us from our brokenness, raising us with Him in resurrection to touch the face of His Father.’

λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἤξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν
Lègo dhe ymìn òti pollì apò anatólōn kai dhysmōn èxousi kai anaklithèsondai metà Abhra’àm kai Isàak kai Iakòbh en tee bhasilèia ton ouranòn.

But I tell you that many from east and west will be there, sitting down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob when heaven reigns.

Matthew/Μαθθαιου 7.24

A reflection on Matthew 8.11 ‘This saying of Jesus, making space for the non-Jew, comes in the midst of Jewish Matthew’s telling of His second miracle story, that of the healing of the Roman centurion’s servant. Jesus is taken aback by the Gentile’s faith, and remarks that He has not seen the like in Israel. He then points to a time coming when the nations will sit at the same table as the Fathers of Israel, sharing with them in the blessings of heaven’s reign. Israel’s Messiah is the key to Israel’s covenant being shared with all those who will entrust themselves to His covenant-bonded grace.’

בְּטַח אֶל-יְהוָה בְּכָל-לִבְךָ וְאֶל-בִּינְתְּךָ אֶל-תַּשְׁעֵן בְּכָל-דַּרְכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ וְהוּא יִישַׁר אֲרָחֹתֶיךָ
Betàch el-Adonài be-khòl libbèkha, ve-èl binatkhà al-tisha'èn; be-khòl derakhèykha da'èhu,
ve-hù ye-yashèr orkhotèykha
Have confidence in the LORD with all your heart, and don't depend on your own way of
thinking; in all your ways, get to know Him, and He will direct your journey.
Proverbs 3v5,6/ משלי ג"ה 1

A reflection on Prov.3.5,6 'The word in the Hebrew here for trust is betàch, meaning to throw oneself upon, to rely on completely. If we are fixing life for ourselves, we won't bother depending on the Lord. But the Poet here is urging us to have full confidence in the Lord and to doubt our own interpretation of the situation. It seems counter-intuitive, in such a self-reliant culture, to trust beyond our own inner theatre; yet the promise is here for the receiving.'

January 11 2017 Day 11: readings today; Genesis 24:52-26:16, Matthew 8:18-34, Psalm 10:1-15, Proverbs 3:7-8

וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַוָּז וַיִּמְצָא בַשָּׁנָה הַהִוא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ יְהוָה
Va-yizrà Yitzchàk ba-àretz ha-hu, va-yimtzà ba-shanàh ha-hèe mé'ah she'arim va-
yebharkhèhu Adonài.
And Isaac sowed in that land and received in that year a hundred-fold, for God had blessed him.

Genesis 26.12/ בראשית כ"ב

A reflection on Genesis 26.12 'The situation Isaac is in here in this verse does not, on the surface, seem a good one. It is a time of famine, and he has been reduced to migrating into the territory of the newly-arrived Philistines, at Gerar, to live. But God reminds him there of the covenant He made with his father to bless his descendants, and thus, in spite of the circumstances, God gives a hundred times in harvest what Isaac has sowed, as a sign of the Lord's 'chesed', His covenant-bonded grace. The Hebrew for a hundredfold, (Me'ah She'arim) is the name today by which a neighbourhood of Jerusalem is known, home to many 'Chasidim', Orthodox Jews.

καὶ ἰδοὺ πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἐξῆλθεν εἰς συνάντησιν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν παρεκάλεσαν ὅπως μεταβῆ ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων αὐτῶν.

Kai idhòu, pàsa ee pòlis exèelthen ees synàndeesin to Ieesòu, kai idhòndes avtòn parekàlesan òpos metabhèe apò ton orìon avtòn.

And look, the whole town came out to meet Jesus, and seeing Him, they requested him to leave their district.

Matthew 8.34/Μαθθαιον 8.34

A reflection on Matthew 8.34. 'We must not get the idea that Jesus was somehow universally welcomed wherever He went. When people's status quo is upset, even when that is caused by a beautiful miracle, they can become negative. Here, although a man has been set free from oppressive evil powers, the disruption of the commercial equilibrium of the pig-herders causes the whole town to want Jesus, the Rescuer, to leave them alone!

January 12 2017 Day 12: readings today; Genesis 26:17-27:46, Matthew 9:1-17, Psalm 10:16-18, Proverbs 3:9-10

וַיַּעֲתֶק מִשָּׁם וַיַּחְפֹּר בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וְלֹא רָבוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ רְחֹבֹת וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי-עֲתָה הִרְחִיב יְהוָה לָנוּ וּפְרִינוּ בְּאֶרֶץ

Va-ya'tèq mishàm, va-yachpòr be'èr achèret ve-lò rabhù aleyhà, va-yiqrà shemàh

'Rechobhòt', va-yòmer, ki attàh hirchìbh Adonài lànù u-pharìnu bha-àretz.

And he (Isaac) moved on from there, and dug another well, for which they did not have to contend; and he called its name 'Spacious' because, he said, 'now the Lord has given us space and we can find fruitfulness in the land.'

Genesis 26.22/ בראשית כו"כב

A reflection on Genesis 26.22 'Isaac runs into contention with the Philistine settlers around him, but moves on to a place where he does not have to struggle any more. Here, there is water and peace, and he calls the place 'Rehobot', meaning spacious. In this spacious place, away from contention, he will be able to be fruitful, to flourish. In the place of God's provision there is space, peace and fruitfulness; we walk into that place when we give up competing for our own agendas and allow Him to bless us on His terms.'

ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἀμαρτίας - τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· ἐγερθεὶς ἄρῶν σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.

'Ἰna dhe idhèete òti exousìan èkhi o Yiòs tou anthròpou epì tees yees aphiènai amartias – tòte lèyi to paralytikò,- 'Eyerthèes, aròn sou teen klineen kai ýpaye ees ton eekòn sou.'

'But so you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to erase failures (now He started saying to the paralysed man) – get up, pick up your mat and return to your own house.'

Matthew 9.6/Μαθθαιον 9.6

A reflection on Matthew 9.6 'Jesus demonstrates that He has power to lift us out of the brokenness and failure of our past by lifting this sick man up from his bed. For Jesus, our need is not just to be outwardly healthy, but to be whole inside as well. A few verses later, in v.12, He describes Himself as the doctor of sick souls, come to forgive and heal with His love.'

January 13 2017 Day 13: reading today; Genesis 28:1-29:35, Matthew 9:18-38, Psalm 11:1-7, Proverbs 3:11-12

וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מַה-נֹּרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם

Va-yirà, va-yomèr, 'Mah norà ha-maqòm ha-zèh! Eyn zeh, ki-im bet Elohim, ve-zèh sha-àr ha-shamayim.'

And he (Jacob) was overawed, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is no less than the house of God, and this is the entrance-gate to heaven.'

Genesis 28.17/ז' בראשית כח"

A reflection on Genesis 28.17. 'Bill Johnson in his book, *Hosting the Presence*' makes the point that there is no building to be seen in this story. Jacob is out in the desert, but God's presence comes close in a vision of the close connection between the seen and the unseen, so that He is known intimately. The entrance to heaven is the place where we connect with the presence-face of God, in intimacy and holy awe, in whatever physical location we happen to be.'

Ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἐσπλαγχνίσθη περὶ αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἦσαν ἐκλελυμένοι καὶ ἐρριμμένοι ὡς πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα.

Idhòn dhe tous òchlous, esplanchnìsthee perì avtòn, òti èesan eklelymèni kai errimèni os pròbhata mee èxhonda pimèna.

Seeing then the crowds, He was gutted for them, for they were lethargic and disparate, like sheep not having a shepherd.

Matthew/Μαθθαιον 9.36

A reflection on Matthew 9.36 ‘What energises Jesus to His mission is visceral compassion. He is preaching, healing and setting free, but He is limited to one human body. As He looks on the vast amount of need before Him, He recognises the urgency of bringing help and healing to a wider constituency. What He needs are workers in the harvest.’

כִּי-צַדִּיק יְהוָה צְדָקוֹת אֱהָב יֵשֶׁר יַחֲזוּ פָנָיו

Ki tzaddìq Adonài, tzedakòt ahèbh; yashàr yechezù phanèmo

For the Lord of integrity loves deeds of integrity; those making right choices will gaze on His face.

Psalms 11.7/תהילים יא"ז

A reflection on Psalm 11.7 ‘God is good, and loves integrity, wholeness in our lives. When we admit evil to our behaviour, it creates interference in our relationship with God, our source, which can only be cleared by blocking up its entrance, and wholeheartedly turning back onto the straight way with Him. Only then, the Singer says, will we have a clear view of His presence-face.’

January 14 2017 Day 14: readings today; Genesis 30:1-31:16, Matthew 10:1-23, Psalm 12:1-8, Proverbs 3:13-15

אֲנֹכִי הָאֵל בֵּית-אֵל אֲשֶׁר מִשְׁחַתָּ שָׁם מִצֵּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָדַרְתָּ לִּי שָׁם נָדַר עֲתָה קוּם צֵא מִן-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְשׁוּב אֶל-אָרֶץ מוֹלַדְתְּךָ

Anokhì ha-Èl Bet-Èl, ashèr mashàchta sham matzebhàh ashèr nadàrta li sham nèder; atàh qum, tze min-ha-àretz ha-zòt ve-shùbh el-èretz moladetèkha.

I am the God of Bethel (House of God), the place where you anointed a memorial stone, at which you swore me an oath; now get up and leave this land and return to the land of your birth.

Genesis 31.13/ בראשית לא"ג

A reflection on Genesis 31.13 ‘The story of Jacob’s years in Padan-Aram with Laban and his family are full of intrigue, competition and deception. Jacob, the wide-boy wheeler-dealer has met his match in his father-in-law, who gets years of service out of him and marries off his two daughters to him! The births of Jacob’s children are a comic tale of strife between the sister-wives, implicating their servants in the battle. Yet God is with Jacob, His promise is unyielding, and now, God calls Jacob back to the place where they first met at the House of God; there, no longer able to scheme and deal, Jacob will come face to face with His destiny and be restored to the purpose for this fruitfulness, given in spite of his waywardness.’

Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν αὐτὰ καὶ θεραπεύειν πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν.
Kai proskalesàmenos tous dhòdheka matheetàs avtòu èdhoken avtìs exousìan pnevmàton akathàrton òste ekbhàlin avtà kai therapèvin pàsan nòson kai pàsan malakìan.
And having called His twelve apprentices together, He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal all kinds of sickness and disease.
Matthew/Μαθθαιον 10.1

A reflection on Matthew 10.1 ‘What equipment did Jesus give His twelve apprentices to extend His mission? College training? Theological grounding in rational debate? No, He gave them power to demonstrate His message by overcoming the oppression of evil in people’s lives through healing and releasing them by the power of His life-giving name.’

הוֹשִׁיעָה יְהוָה כִּי-גַמַר חַסִיד כִּי-פָסוּ אֱמוּנִים מִבְּנֵי אָדָם
Hoshìa Adonài, ki-gamàr chasìd, ki phasù emunìm mibhnèy adàm.
Save us, Lord, for the covenant-keeper is disappearing, for the faithful are failing from humankind.
Psalm 12.1/ב"ב תהילים יב

A reflection on Psalm 12.1 ‘Since covenant-keeping is such a core part of the goodness of God, when men renege on their commitments, the Singer laments their breaking faith. When man’s word is so brittle and breakable, the resulting insecurity undermines the wellbeing of humanity. No wonder that there is a cry here for rescue by the One whose covenant-bonded grace is limitless and completely assured.

January 15 2017 Day 15: readings today; Genesis 31:17-32:12, Matthew 10:24-11:6, Psalm 13:1-6, Proverbs 3:16-18

קִטְנֹתִי מִכֹּל הַחֻסְדִּים וּמִכֹּל-הָאֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת-עַבְדְּךָ כִּי בְמַקְלִי עֲבַרְתִּי אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן
הִזָּה וְעַתָּה הֵייתִי לְשְׁנֵי מַחֲנֹת
Katònti mi-kòl ha-chasadìm u-mi-kòl ha-emèt ashèr asità et-abhdèkha, ki bhe-maqlì abhàrti et-ha-Yardèn ha-zèh ve-attàh hayìti lishnèy machanòt.
I was so insignificant, unworthy of all the covenant-bonded graces and of all the faithfulness that you have done to your servant, so that having crossed this Jordan with just my stick in hand, I have now become two tribes!
Genesis 32.10/יא בראשית לב

A reflection on Genesis 32.10 ‘Having left Padan-Aram with all his family and goods, Jacob is now on the verge of facing his estranged brother, Esau. Here is a situation he cannot fix; he sees his need of God, and recognises the Lord’s faithfulness to him in spite of his waywardness. We are of course not worthy of any of God’s grace towards us, but His love is not based on our performance, but on His willing desire towards us. He doesn’t need us, but He does want us!’

μηὲν φοβηθήτε· πολλῶν στρουθίων διαφέρετε ὑμεῖς.
Mee oun phobheethèete; pollòn strouthìon dhiaphèrete ymèes.
So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many wee sparrows.
Matthew 10.31/Μαθθαιον 10.31

A reflection on Matthew 10.31 'There is something of deep tenderness in the way Jesus speaks to His apprentices at this point; having warned them of the serious risks of following in this way of the cross, He assures them that their identity, their very being is totally safe in His Father's hands, who cares for them far more than for 'the wee sparrows', Matthew's Greek ascribing to Jesus not just the normal word for this everyday bird, *strouthós*, but the diminutive, *strouthíos*.

January 16 2017 Day 16: reading today; Genesis 32:13-34:31. Matthew 11:7-30, Psalm 14:1-7, Proverbs 3:19-20

וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם פְּנֵי אֵל כִּי-רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנִים וַתִּנָּצֵל נַפְשִׁי

Va-yiqrà Ya'aqòbh shem ha-maqòm, 'Peni-El' ki ra-iti Elohim panim el-panim va-tinatzell naphshì.

And Jacob called the name of the place 'God's-Face', 'for I saw God face to face and got away with my life!'

Genesis 32.30/ בראשית לב" לא

A reflection on Genesis 32.30 'The word for 'face' in Hebrew, 'panim', is the same word translated elsewhere as 'presence.' God never comes in an abstract, He always comes in person. And here He comes to Jacob in the most intimate and closely physical way, by wrestling him through the night. In Jesus Christ, we come again face to face, cheek to cheek with God, His presence as close as our breath. Each moment of lives becomes with Him a 'Peniel'.

ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ἕως ἄρτι ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται, καὶ βιασταὶ ἀρπάζουσιν αὐτήν.

Apò dhe ton eemeròn Yoànnou tou Bhaptistòu eos àrti, ee bhasilèia ton ouranòn bhiàzetai, kai bhiastài arpàzousin avtèen.

From the days of John the Baptist until now, heaven's reign is being forcefully brought in and forceful people are grabbing hold of it.

Matthew 11.12/Μαθθαιον 11.12

A reflection on Matthew 11.12 'Jesus makes clear that the reign of heaven is not a passive experience of ethereal spirituality. Since the bold declarations of John the Baptist with his calls to have a new way of thinking, the rule of God has been grabbed with both hands by those who catch the dynamic of its vision. In a day when so often the revelation of Jesus Christ has been diluted into passivism by rationalist-humanist religion, Jesus still encourages His disciples to act boldly to see His Spirit's power and presence radically transforming lives.'

January 17 2017 Day 17: readings today; Genesis 35:1-36:43, Matthew 12:1-21, Psalm 15:1-5, Proverbs 3:21-26

וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ וַיִּקְרָא לַמָּקוֹם אֵל בֵּית-אֵל כִּי שָׁם נִגְלוּ אֵלָיו הָאֱלֹהִים בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אָחִיו
Va-yibhèn sham mizbèy-ach, va-yiqrà la-maqòm 'El Beyt-Èl' ki sham niglù eylâyv ha-Elohim be-bharchò mi-penèy achìv.

And he (Jacob-Israel) built there an altar, and called the place 'El Beyt-El' (God of the house of God) for there God revealed Himself to him when he was fleeing from the presence of his brother.

Genesis 35.7/ בראשית לה" ז

A reflection on Genesis 35.7 'After all his wheeling and dealing, ducking and diving, Jacob, the wide-boy, transformed by his encounter with the presence-face of God into Israel, the God-grappler, comes back to the place where he said 'Surely this is the entrance gate to heaven.' He has rid his family of their non-god idols, and now finally yields wholeheartedly to the LORD, the God of Beit-El, in abandoned submission and sacrifice.'

εἰ δὲ ἐγνώκειτε τί ἐστὶν ἔλεον θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, οὐκ ἂν καταδικάσατε τοὺς ἀναιτίους. κύριος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου.

Ee dhe egnòkeete tì-estin èleon thèlo kai ou thysian, ouk katedhikàsate tous anaitious. Kýrios gàr-estin o Yiòs tou anthròpou kai tou Sabhàtou.

ולו ידעתם מה־הוא שנאמר חסד חפצתי ולא זבח לא הרשעתם את הנקים כי בן־האדם הוא גם־אדון השבת

Ve-lò yadatèm ma hu she-ne'emàr 'Chèsed chaphàtzti ve-lò zèbhach', lo hirsha'tèm et-ha-neqiyim, ki Ben ha-adàm, hu gam Adòn ha-Shabbàt.

For if you had known the meaning of 'I want covenant-bonded grace more than sacrifice', you would not have condemned these innocents. For the Son of man is also Lord of the Rest-day Sabbath.

Matthew 12.7,8/Μαθθαιου 12.7,8/מתי יב"ז ח

A reflection on Matthew 12.7,8 'In this sharp exchange with the Pharisees, who are accusing His apprentice-students of breaking the Rest-day laws, Jesus calls them back to the heart behind the directives of God, over their letter. He quotes Hosea 6.6, which calls for 'chesed', covenant-bonded grace as prior to the rites of sacrifice and relationship with God above burnt offerings. Jesus, as the Son of man, the second 'Adam' declares Himself ruler and judge over the rites of the Rest-day Sabbath. It is made for man's recreation, He says, not for man to be enslaved by it.'

January 18 2017 Day 18: readings today; Genesis 37:1-38:30, Matthew 12:22-45, Psalm 16:1-11, Proverbs 3:27-32

וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כֶּתֶנֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁחֲטוּ שְׂעִיר עִזִּים וַיִּטְבְּלוּ אֶת־הַכֶּתֶנֶת בַּדָּם

Va-yiqechù et-ketònet Yosèph va-yishchatù se'èer izzim ve-yitbelù et-ha-kutònet ba-dàm.

And they took Joseph's coat, and having killed a goat-kid, they immersed the coat in its blood.

Genesis 37.31/לא לז" בראשית

A reflection on Genesis 37.31 'There is a strange irony in the story of Jacob-Israel's deception by his sons, claiming Joseph's death between the jaws of a wild animal. It was goat-kids that Jacob himself killed when he fooled his own father, Isaac, out of the blessing in place of the elder son, Esau. Now, the blood of a goat serves the terrible lie Jacob is told to blind him to the wicked disposal into slavery of Joseph by his envious brothers.'

תוֹדִיעֵנִי אֵרַח חַיִּים

שֶׁבַע שְׂמֵחוֹת אֶת־פְּנִיךָ נְעֻמּוֹת בְּיַמִּינְךָ נָצַח

Todièni òrach chayìm; sòbha smachòt et-panèykha, ne'imòt bi-minkhà nètzach.

You let me experience the living way; your face brings me satisfying joy, sweet things are at your right hand forever.

Psalm 16.11/יא טז תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 16.11 'It's hard to convey in the English language the delight the Hebrew Psalmist feels in God's provision in this verse. He is walking on a path not just to life, but a living path; he senses the closeness of God's face, a place of joy and satisfaction, and is assured of sweetness and enjoyment close up to God's side without limit or ending. Such joy cannot easily be communicated by any words, but is known and identified with by those who daily touch the face of God.'

January 19 2017 Day 19: readings today; Genesis 39:1-41:16, Matthew 12:46-13:23, Psalm 17:1-15, Proverbs 3:33-35

וַיַּעַן יוֹסֵף אֶת-פַּרְעֹה לְאמֹר בְּלִעְדֵי אֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת-שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה
Va-ya'an Yosèph et-Par'òh, lemòr, 'Bil'adài! Elohìm ya'anèh et-shelòm Paròh.'

(Pharaoh is looking for Joseph to interpret his dreams)

And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, 'It's nothing to do with me! God will give Pharaoh satisfaction (Heb. Shalòm) in this.'

Genesis 41.16/ בראשית מא"ט ז

A reflection on Genesis 41.16 'Through the furnace of adversity, Joseph has come to realise his total dependence on the favour of God in his life; gone is the cocksure young wearer of the fancy coat with sleeves regaling his family with his dreams. Here now is the former slave and prisoner who knows only one source of 'shalom', of peace, wholeness and security – the Lord, God of His forefathers. From this source Joseph now lives.'

ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν καλὴν σπαρείς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων καὶ
συνιών· ὃς δὴ καρποφορεῖ καὶ ποιεῖ ὁ μὲν ἑκατόν, ὁ δὲ ἐξήκοντα, ὁ δὲ
τριάκοντα.

O dhe epì teen yeen teen kalèen sparìs, outòs-estin o ton lògon akòuon kai synìon; os dèe karpophorì kai pee-ì o men ekatòn, o dhe exèekonda, o dhe triàkonda.

But the one who sows into good earth, this is the one who hearing the word also grasps its implications; so this one is fruitful and produces then a hundredfold, sixtyfold or thirtyfold.

Matthew 13.23/ Μαθθαιον 13.23

A reflection on Matthew 13.23 'In His explanation of the parable of the sower, Jesus makes clear that hearing His word is only half the response. Hearing has to be tied in to realising the implications in our lives and acting on them; this is the key to fruitfulness. We can have a million facts in our heads and be living in a fruitless desert. Perhaps Jesus had in mind His forefather, Isaac, who, once he listened to God, sowed in Gerar (Gen 26.12) and produced 'mé'ah she'arim', a hundredfold.'

January 20 2017 Day 20: reading today; Genesis 41:17-42:17, Matthew 13:24-46, Psalm 18:1-15, Proverbs 4:1-6

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-עַבְדָּיו הֲנִמְצָא כֹּה־אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ
Va-yòmer Par'oh el abhadàv, 'Ha-nimtzàh ka-zèh, ish ashèr rùach Elohìm bo?'

(Pharaoh speaking of Joseph)

And Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Where could we find another like this man, in whom is the Spirit of God?'

Genesis 41.38/ בראשית מא"ל ח

A reflection on Genesis 41.38 ‘Joseph has been quick to point away from himself to the Lord as the source of his insight into Pharaoh’s dreams; because of that, the pagan emperor acknowledges God as the One from whom this wisdom comes, and that His Spirit dwells in Joseph’s life. Joseph has learned not to appropriate to himself the power of God, as perhaps he had done earlier in his life, and because of his taking the low place, God is about to exalt him and to use him to bring relief to Egypt and the nations, including his Hebrew family.’

Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῶν κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὐρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυψε, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ ὑπάγει καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει πωλεῖ καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον.

Pàlin omìa estin ee bhasilèia ton ouranòn thesavrò kekrymèno en to agrò, on evròn ànthropos èkrypse, kai apò tees charàs autòu ypàgee kai pànda òsa èchee polèe kai agoràzee ton agròn ekìnou.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man finds then hides, and out of his delight goes and sells everything he has to buy that field.

Matthew 13.44/Μαθθαιου 13.44

A reflection on Matthew 13.44 ‘Receiving the kingdom of God is all or nothing; there are no half-measures with Jesus. Finding the treasure which is His gift of life abundant, it requires that we abandon all other claims to our allegiance to experience the true wealth of His presence and His hope.’

January 21 2017 Day 21: readings today; Genesis 42:18-43:34, Matthew 13:47-14:12, Psalm 18:16-36, Proverbs 4:7-10

וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שִׁמְעַי יוֹסֵף כִּי הַמְלִיץ בֵּינְתֶם וַיִּסַּב מִעֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּבְרַךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲלֵהֶם וַיְדַבֵּר אֲלֵהֶם וַיִּקַּח מֵאֵתָם אֶת-שִׁמְעוֹן וַיֹּאסֶר אֹתוֹ לְעֵינֵיהֶם

Ve-hèm lo yad’ù ki shomèa Yosèph, ki ha-melitz beynotàm; va-yassòbh mé-alèyhem va-yèbhek, va-yashàbh alèyhem va-yedabèr alèyhem, va-yiqqàch et-Shime-òn va-ye’essòr otò leynèyhem.

(Joseph is still unkown to his brothers)

And they did not know that Joseph could understand them, because they were using a translator; then Joseph turned away from them, and wept. Coming back to them, he continued speaking, and took Simeon and had him bound before their eyes.

Genesis 42.23,24/בראשית מב"כג כד

A reflection on Genesis 42.23,24 ‘There is amazing tension and drama in the story of Joseph with his brothers. We can see his struggle to hold it together as he realises his dream of authority over them is being fulfilled in a way he could never have imagined, through his own sacrifice and suffering, bringing him to this place before them in Egypt. This is not the last time Joseph will weep, but for now, he holds to the subterfuge to bring about a chastening for them and an eventual joy for the whole band of brothers together.’

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν ὁμοίος ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότη, ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιά.

O de èepen avtìs, ‘Dhià tòuto pas grammatèvs matheetevthèes ees teen bhasilèian ton ouranòn omìos estin anthròpo ecodhèspotees òstis ekbhàlli ek tou thesavròu avtòu kainà kai palaià.

Then He said to them, ‘So every student apprenticed to the kingdom of heaven is like a man heading up a household, who brings out of his storeroom things both new and old.’

Matthew 13.52/Μαθθαιου 13.52

A reflection on Matthew 13.52 ‘In an age when novelty is constantly promoted as better than what has gone before, and what has been is dismissed as *passé*, Jesus encourages us to integrate our inheritance, what we learned from our forefathers, with the new insights the Holy Spirit brings us day by day into the amazing life story of God. In this way, we show ourselves wise stewards of God’s kingdom treasure, equally valuing past and present as we hand on to the future.’

ראשית חכמה קנה חכמה ובכל-קנייך קנה בינה

Reshìt chokhmàh, qenèh chokhmàh u-vekhòl qinyankhà qenèh bhinàh

The primary source is wisdom, so get wisdom and with all your getting, get discernment

Proverbs 4v7/מב"ז משלים ד"ז

A reflection on Prov.4.7 ‘The Proverbs are not just quaint old sayings; the meaning of the name of the book in Hebrew is closer to ‘Guiding Principles’, since it contains keys to ruling in life. The theme of wisdom runs throughout Proverbs, because wisdom is seen as the primary source, the first cause. And it is not a fact-knowing wisdom like the Greeks’ ‘sophia’; this is a wisdom which is experiential, which cannot know without it being expressed in life. This is God’s wisdom, and it flows from taking God seriously. Without it, there is only folly.’

January 22 2017 Day 22: readings today; Genesis 44:1-45:28, Matthew 14:13-36, Psalm 18:37-50, Proverbs 4:11-13

ויפל על-צוארי בנימן-אחיו ויבך ובנימן--בכה על-צואריו

וינשק לכל-אחיו ויבך עליהם ואחרי כן דברו אחיו אתו

Va-yippòl al-tzavrèy Bhinyamìn achìv va-yèbhk u-Bhinyamìn bakhàh al-tzava’ràyv

Va-yenashèq le-khòl achàyv va-yèbhk alèyhem ve-acharèy khen dibbrù achàyv ittò.

And his brother (Joseph) gave Benjamin a big hug and wept, and Benjamin was weeping and hugging him back. And he kissed each of his brothers and cried on them, and after that, his brothers talked it all over with him.

Genesis 45.14,15/ט"ו יד בראשית מה"י

A reflection on Genesis 45.14-15, ‘The culmination of this suspense-filled drama is full of raw emotion, as Joseph reveals to his brothers his true identity. Tears flow freely, and there is a sense of home-coming as this estranged family finds redemption through God’s protection and provision. In Jesus Christ, rejected like Joseph, we also discover the one who embraces us and rescues us from the guilt of the past and receives us as His family, pulling us close to Himself and immersing us into the presence of His Father. What an amazing story we are in!’

οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ ἐλθόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες· ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς εἶ.

ee dhe en to plìo elthòndes prosekúneesan avtò lègondes, 'Aleethòs Theòu Yiòs ee.'

Those then in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'

Matthew/Μαθθαῖον 14.33

A reflection on Matthew 14.33 ‘Peter tests Jesus by asking to come to Him on the water. As he goes towards the Lord at His invitation, Peter finds himself going down. Jesus reaches out and lifts him, laughing at his small faith (Greek *oligòpiste*, little-faith), but walking him back to the boat. At this, the storm they were in dies down, and they worship Him as the Son of God. (Note how Matthew has Jesus given ‘worship’ here, as when the Magi come in Matthew 2, and at the end in Matt.28, among others.)’

מגדל ישועות מלכו ועשה חסד למשיחו--לדוד ולזרעו עד-עולם

Magdil yeshu'ot malkò ve-osèh chèsed li-mshichò le-David u-le-zar'ò ad-olàm
You have made great rescues of Your king, and enacted covenant-grace toward Your
anointed, to David and his descendants without limit.
Psalm 18.50/ח"נ תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 18.50 'In the Hebrew language, covenanted grace, or 'chesed' is never just an attitude, it is always an action. And here the Singer sings of the Lord's active grace towards David, His anointed king, and his descendants. This is evidenced through God's repeated intervention in rescuing them, his 'yeshu'ot'; for us, this culminates in the one great act of covenanted 'chesed' grace in the Rescuer Himself, Yeshu'a, Jesus.'

January 23 2017 Day 23: readings today; Genesis 46:1-47:31, Matthew 15:1-28, Psalm 19:1-14, Proverbs 4:14-19

ויברך יעקב את-פרעה ויצא מלפני פרעה

Va-yebharèkh Ya'aqòv et-Phar'òh va-yeytzèy mi-liphnèy Phar'òh
Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and retired from his presence
Genesis 47v10/י"א בראשית

A reflection on Genesis 47.10 'The promise to Abraham was that he would bless the nations. Here is the aged Jacob-Israel doing just that to the ruler of one of the most powerful nations of earth of his day, the Egyptians. To bless is to bend in favour towards, like a father bending to embrace a child. The Hebrew original then says that Jacob went out 'from before Pharaoh's face', but often English translations have 'Pharaoh's presence.' The presence of the king means being in sight of the king, before his face.'

οὐ τὸ εἰσερχόμενον εἰς τὸ στόμα κοινοῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦτο κοινοῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

Ou to eiserchòmenon ees to stòma kinì ton ànthropon, allà to ekporevòmenon ek tou stòmatos, tòuto kinì ton ànthropon.

It's not what goes into the the mouth that defiles someone, but what comes out of the mouth – that's what makes someone polluted.

Matthew/Μαθθαιον 15.11

A reflection on Matthew 15.11 'There are many traditions surrounding food and what should and should not be eaten, and how ; but Jesus makes it clear that the preoccupation of the Pharisees with hand-washing and hygiene has displaced the key issue of the purity of the heart. In an era like ours where there is also a tendency to self-righteousness over what is good and not good to eat, Jesus' words about what comes out of our mouths being potentially more toxic than what goes in still has resonance for us two thousand years later.'

January 24 2017 Day 24: readings today; Genesis 48:1-49:33, Matthew 15:29-16:12, Psalm 20:1-9, Proverbs 4:20-27

מאל אביך ויעזרך ואת שדי ויברכה ברכת שמים מעל ברכת תהום רבצת תחת ברכת
שמים ורחם

Mey –Èl abhìkha ve-ya'azrèkha ve-èt Shaddài vi-bharkhèkha birkhòt shamàyim mé-àl
birkhòt tehòm robhètzet tàchat birkhòt shaddìm va-ràcham.

From the God of your father, the One who will help you, the Most High, may He bless you with the blessings of heaven above, the blessings of the depths that lie below, with blessings of the breast and of the womb.

Genesis 49v25/ה"כ בראשית מט

A reflection on Genesis 49.25 ‘As Jacob-Israel is on his deathbed, he recalls the God who met Him at Bethel, and calls down on his sons (and Joseph’s sons, whom he adopts as his own) the blessings of that God who promised to guide and guard him and make him fruitful. In the midst of all his last words are these, over his beloved Joseph, calling the blessings of God on him from above and below, blessings of breast and womb. These last two seem unusual to our eye, perhaps, until we remember that God Himself is called El-Shaddai, the Most High, derived from the word ‘shaddim’, the breasts and El-Rachum, God of visceral compassion, derived from the same root as ‘rechem’, womb in Hebrew.’

ὥστε τοὺς ὄχλους θαυμάσαι βλέποντας κωφοὺς λαλοῦντας, κυλλοὺς ὑγιεῖς, χωλοὺς περιπατοῦντας καὶ τυφλοὺς βλέποντας· καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν Θεὸν Ἰσραήλ.

Òste tous òchlous thavmàsai bhlèpontas kophòus lalòuntas, kyllòus iyìs, cholòus peripatòuntas kai typhlòus bhlèpontas; kai edhòxasan ton Theòn Israèel.

So the crowds were astounded, seeing the dumb speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking and the blind seeing; and they celebrated the God of Israel.

Matthew/Μαθθαιου 15.31

A reflection on Matthew 15.31 ‘Jesus now heads south, and east into the region of the Ten Cities, the Decapolis (Greek Δεκαπόλις). This was a predominantly Gentile area, also, with ten self-governing communities inaugurated along a Roman model. Here Jesus heals a deaf mute, employing hands, saliva and sighing in the process of the healing! Although Jesus tries to keep the noise down, His fame is heard far and wide, and many more come to receive His ministry, praising Israel’s God – note here that this would have been among Gentiles.’

נְרַנְנָה בִּישׁוּעַתְךָ וּבְשֵׁם-אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִדְגַל
יְמַלֵּא יְהוָה כָּל-מִשְׁאָלוֹתֶיךָ

Nerànenà bi-Yeshuatèkha, u-bhe-shem Elohèynu nid-gòl;

Yemalè Adonài kol mishalotèykha

We will rejoice in Your deliverance, and in the name of our God we will wave the flags!

May the Lord fulfil all your desires!

Psalm 20.5/תהילים כ"ו

A reflection on Psalm 20.5 ‘There is so often a mismatch between the sheer exuberance of the original Hebrew Psalms and the understated, even dour expression of them in the English version. The Singer of Israel here speaks of celebration and flag-waving, flaunting the rescuing power of God whose deliverance is worthy of a party! We must be unafraid to loose from the bands of Brittianity to experience the glory of the God of dancing David!’

January 25 2017 Day 25: readings today; Genesis 50:1 - Exodus 2:10, Matthew 16:13-17:9, Psalm 21:1-13, Proverbs 5:1-6

וְאַתֶּם חָשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה אֱלֹהִים חָשַׁבְהָ לְטוֹבָהּ לְמַעַן עֲשֶׂה כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַחִיית עַם-רַב
Ve-atèm chashbhetèm alài ra’àh, Elohim chashabhàh le-tobhàh le-ma’àn assòh ka-yòm ha-zèh ke-ha-chayòt am rabh.

But the evil you planned against me, God has turned into a plan for good, so that He has made it today into the survival of a lot of people.

Genesis 50v20/בראשית נ"כ

A reflection on Genesis 50.20 ‘After the death of their father, Jacob-Israel, Joseph’s brothers are expecting him to wreak vengeance on them for their wickedness toward him when he was young. But far from taking revenge, Joseph lets them see that God can overturn our evil plans into good outcomes. While ends do not justify means, God even has our sin in His purview, and will not allow our foolishness to derail His ultimate destination of goodness and peace. In spite of the evil done to him, Joseph was able to administer God’s plans for the survival of many people. As the Singer says later, ‘You turn the anger of man into Your praise.’ (Psalm 76.10)’

καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔλαμψε τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, τὰ δὲ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο λευκὰ ὡς τὸ φῶς.

Kai metamorphòthee èmprosthen avtòn, kai èlampse to pròsopon avtòu os o èelios, ta dhe imàtia avtòu eyèneto levkà os to phos.

And His form was changed right in front of them, and His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became like white light.

Matthew 17.2/Μαθθαιον 17.2

A reflection on Matthew 17.2 ‘The word used in the Greek for what Jesus experiences is *metamóρφosis* (Greek μεταμόρφωσις) meaning transformation. It’s the same word Paul uses of the believer in 2 Cor. 3.18 when he speaks of being transformed from one degree of glory to another. Here then is the revelation to three of the disciples of the full glory of the Son in His divine nature. Perhaps this is the kingship glory Jesus refers to in Mk.9.1. When their focus begins to edge onto the figures of Moses and Elijah, they are left seeing only Jesus, and the voice from heaven pointing to Him alone as the key to the fulfilment of the promises. The disciples’ reaction is terror, but Jesus raises them up and tells them not to fear.’

January 26 2017 Day 26: readings today; Exodus 2:11-3:22, Matthew 17:10-27, Psalm 22:1-18, Proverbs 5:7-14

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתֵּר מִשֶּׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יָרָא מִהַבֵּיט אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים

Va-yòmer, ‘Anokhì Elohèy abhikha, Elohèy Abhrahàm, Elohèy Itzchàq ve-Elohèy Ya’aqòbh’; va-yastèr Moshèh panàyv, ki yarè mehabìt el-ha-Elohìm.

And He said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob’ ; and Moses hid his face, because he was afraid of encountering God.’

Exodus 3v6/ שְׁמוֹת ג' י' 1

A reflection on Exodus 3.6: ‘In a sense, Moses has already looked upon God’s face in the fire in the bush. We are told this is an appearance of the Lord’s messenger, the carrier of His presence, who has made Himself visible. Yet Moses, given his history, is scared of the encounter. Like Adam, he hides from God’s face. Yet before too long, he would be in such communion with the Lord, that the very flesh of his face would be incandescent with the glory of God. Through Christ, we are invited to turn to face God without fear, to be ourselves aflame with the fire into which we have been immersed by His Holy Spirit. Moses turns away here in fear from the bush on fire; he will become one day the man on fire.’

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν ὑμῶν. ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν ὡς κόκκον σινάπεως, ἐρεῖτε τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ, μετάβηθι ἐντεῦθεν ἐκεῖ, καὶ μεταβήσεται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἀδυνατήσῃ ὑμῖν.

O dhe Yeesòs èepen avtis, ‘Dhià teen apistian ymòn. Amèn gar lègo ymìn, èàn ècheete pìstin os kòkkon sinàpeos, erite to òree tòuto, ‘Metàbheethi endèvthen eki’, kai metabhèsetai, kai oudhèn adhnatèesi ymìn.’

So Jesus said to (his disciples), ‘It’s because of your faithlessness; for I am truly saying to you, if you have faith as small as a mustard-seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there!’ and it would be transported, and nothing would be impossible for you.’

Matthew 17.20/Μαθθαιον 17.20

A reflection on Matthew 17.20 ‘Jesus gives his apprentice-followers a straight answer to the question why they could not free the demonised boy brought to them. He says, ‘Because of your non-faith (Greek, ‘apistia’); notice Jesus doesn’t say here, as elsewhere, your ‘little faith’ (Gk. ‘oligòpistos’) but ‘non-faith’. Where there is no faith, even Jesus cannot do much (compare with Nazareth, where the non-faith of the Nazarenes worked against Jesus’ power.) But the good news is, where there is even a smidgeon of faith, we can see transformation. It’s actually encouraging to know that Jesus’ own apprentices came across challenges that were beyond them, but didn’t give up, pursuing faith to the point where they saw great miracles, even after Jesus had gone to the Father.’

January 27 2017 Day 27: readings today; Exodus 4:1-5:21, Matthew 18:1-20, Psalm 22:19-31, Proverbs 5:15-21

וַיְדַבֵּר אַהֲרֹן--אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיַּעַשׂ הָאֵת לְעֵינֵי הָעַם וַיֵּאֱמָרוּ
וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כִּי-פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכִי רָאָה אֶת-עַנְיֵם וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ
Va-yedabbèr Aharòn et kol ha-debharim ashèr dibbèr Adonài el-Moshèh, va-ya’às ha-otòt le-eynèy ha-àm; va-ya’amèn ha-àm va-yishme-ù ki phaqað Adonài et benèy Yisra’èl ve-khì ra’àh et-onyàm va-yiqdù, va-yishtachavù.

So Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had said to Moses, and he did the wonders before the eyes of the people; and the people believed and listened, for the Lord had visited the children of Israel and seen their oppression, so they bowed in flat-out worship.

Exodus 4v30,31/ שמות ד"ל לא

A reflection on Exodus 4.30,31 ‘The people of Israel receive Moses and Aaron, and believe God’s promise when they see the wonders Moses performs. Moses’ qualms about being accepted by his nation are not realised, and Aaron is at his side, having been guided by God to meet his brother returning from the desert. The people’s response to this covenant-grace of God is worship, flat-out, facedown worship. This is not the end of the story, of course, and challenges immediately follow, but for this moment, God’s people are comforted and inspired by His turning up so close to them, and they recall who they are and what kind of hope is theirs.’

οὗ γάρ εἰσι δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν.

Ou gàr-eesi dhýo ee tris syneegmèni ees to emòn ònoma, ekèe-eemee en mèso avtòn.

For where two or three come together into My name, there I am among them.

Matthew 18.20/Μαθθαιον 18.20

A reflection on Matthew 18.20, 'For a Jewish meeting for worship or prayer to happen, a 'synagogue' in other words, there have to be ten men present to form a 'minyàn', a quorum. But Jesus says, when His apprentices 'synagogue', that is, come together, it is His living presence which counts, and which makes any gathering of His disciples with Him, met in His name, a living and active assembly of His people. It's not about numbers; it's about His presence.'

January 28 2017 Day 28: reading today; Exodus 5:22-7:25, Matthew 18:21-19:12, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 5:22-23

לְכֹן אָמַר לְבְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִמַּעַבְדֹתָם וְגִאלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּרֹוּעַ נְטוּיָהּ וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים

'Lakhèn, emòr libhnèy Yisra'èl, Anì Adonài ve-hotzèti etkhèm mi-tàchat sibhlòt Mitzràyim, etkhèm me-abhodatàm, ve-ga'alti etkhèm bizrò'a netuyàh, u-bhi-shphatim gedolim.'

'So tell the people of Israel, I am the LORD and I will release you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, from your slavery, and I will redeem you by reaching out my strong arm, and with major interventions to set things to rights.'

Exodus 6v6/ שְׁמוֹת ו' ו' 1

A reflection on Exodus 6.6 'God's interventions promised here to Israel are to restore the right order. They are not primarily about punishment, but they are about justice and the cosmic balance. The oppression of His covenanted people requires God to act, and this He is about to do, to redeem them, that is, to spring them out of slavery. This is the deliverance promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose names the LORD owns as His covenanted sons. This is an act of *chesed*, of self-obligated grace.'

January 28 2017 Day 28: reading today; Exodus 5:22-7:25, Matthew 18:21-19:12, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 5:22-23

ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ὅτι ὁ ποιήσας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς καὶ εἶπεν, ἕνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ κολληθήσεται τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν;

O dhe apokrithèes èpen avtìs, 'Ouk anègnote òti o pièesas ap-archèes, àrsen kai thèely epìeesen avtòus kai èpen, 'Èneken tòutou katalìpsi ànthropos ton patèra kai teen meetèra kai kolleethèsetai tee yeenaikì avtòu, kai èsondai i dhýo ees sàrka mian'?)

Then in response He (Jesus) said to them, 'Haven't you read how He designed them from the beginning, male and female and said, 'For this reason a man will depart from his father and mother and will be adhered to his wife, and the two of them will become one flesh'?)

Matthew 19.4,5/Μαθθαιον 19.4,5

January 28 2017 Day 28: reading today; Exodus 5:22-7:25, Matthew 18:21-19:12, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 5:22-23

A reflection on Matthew 19.4,5 'In portraying the miracle of His Father's plan for holy matrimony, Jesus does not present to the questioners any novel teaching; rather, He reaches back to the very origins of humankind, clearly re-stating Genesis 2.24 as His own statement of God's purpose for creating the wonder of physical, sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. In their unique and inimitable conjoining, evidenced by the subsequent fruit of their union, two literally become one flesh, every newborn child a cohesion of both its parents' being.'

January 29 2017 Day 29: reading today; Exodus 8:1-9:35, Matthew 19:13-30, Psalm 24:1-10, Proverbs 6:1-5

Πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι.

Pollì dhe èsondai pròti èschati kai èschati pròti

Many of those seeming to be first will be last, and the last, first.

Matthew 19.30/Μαθθαιον 19.30

A reflection on Matthew 19.30 ‘Our human priorities are not the same as God’s priorities. Those man thinks as great celebrities and benefactors will disappear into the background as the children and the poor come to the fore in His reckoning of things. We need to always check our measure of worth against God’s understanding of what truly matters.’

זֶה דּוֹר דּוֹרְשֵׁי, מִבְּחַשְׁי פְּנִיךָ יַעֲקֹב סְלָה

Zeh dor dorshèy, mebhaqeshèy phanèkha Ya’aqòbh, sèlah.

This is a generation of searchers, desiring Your presence-face like Jacob; pause for thought.

Psalm 24.6/תהילים כד"ו

A reflection on Psalm 24.6 ‘ Jacob had a life-changing face-to-face encounter with God on his return to Canaan; God wrestled him all night, and at dawn, bestowed the blessing of a new name, Israel, God-grappler, upon him. But Jacob was left with a limp, a reminder of God’s power. He called the place Peni-el, face of God. Above all things, let us seek that face-to-face encounter with the Lord’s presence; let us be searchers and desirers of Him, twenty-four seven.’

January 30 2017 Day 30: readings today; Exodus 10:1-12:13, Matthew 20:1-28, Psalm 25:1-15, Proverbs 6:6-11

וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאֵת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שָׁם וְרָאִיתִי אֶת-הַדָּם וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵכֶם וְלֹא-
יְהִי בְכֶם נֶגֶף לְמַשְׁחִית בְּהַכְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

Ve-hayàh ha-dàm la-khèm le-òt al ha-batìm ashèr atèm sham, ve-ra-ìti et-ha-dàm u-phasàchti alèykhèm, ve-lò yihyèh va-khèm nègeph le-mashchit be-hakkotì be-èretz Mitzràyim.

And the blood will be for you a sign on the houses where you are, and I will see the blood and I will pass over you, and you will not experience the shock of the destruction with which I am about to strike the land of Egypt.

Exodus 12v13/ שְׁמוֹת יִבְיג

A reflection on Exodus 12.13 ‘On the wood, the blood; the lamb slaughtered, death passes over. And then the people hurry to escape, the prison opened to them, as God’s mighty hand sets them free. ‘Christ, our passover lamb, has been slain for us’ says Paul to his friends in Corinth (1 Cor.5.7), with His blood on the wood. Why would we stay captives any more?’

ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσι καὶ γραμματεῦσι καὶ κατακρινουῦσιν αὐτὸν θανάτῳ, καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰς τὸ ἐμπαῖξαι καὶ μαστιγῶσαι καὶ σταυρῶσαι, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστήσεται.

Idhòu anabhàinomen ees Ierosòlyma, kai o Yiòs tou anthròpou paradhothèsetai tis archierèvsi kai grammatèvsi kai katakrinòusin avtòn thanàto, kai paradhòsousin avtòn tis èthnesin ees to empàixai, mastigòsai kai stavròsai, kai tee tríteee emmèra anastèsetai.

Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and hand Him over to the Gentiles to abuse Him, to whip Him and to crucify Him, and the third day He will rise again.

Matthew 20.18,19/Μαθθαιον 20.18,19

A reflection on Matthew 20.18,19 'If we ever doubt that the passion and resurrection of Jesus was the purpose and plan of God, we need only read these words of Jesus to His apprentice-followers to realise that there was nothing accidental about the betrayal, trial and cross. We also see that both Jew and Gentile together are implicated in the rejection of God, giving the lie to the murderous heresy of Jewish sole culpability for the death of Jesus. The Jews condemned Him, but the Romans abused, whipped and crucified Him. We all carry responsibility for our sins' nailing Messiah to the tree, but it is the Father alone who contradicts all our evil intentions by breaking Him out of the tomb!'

January 31 2017 Day 31: readings today; Exodus 12:14-13:16, Matthew 20:29-21:22, Psalm 25:16-22, Proverbs 6:12-15

וַיֹּאפּוּ אֶת-הַבֶּצֶק אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם עִגְתַּת מִצּוֹת--כִּי לֹא חֲמָץ כִּי-לֶגְרֶשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא יִכְלוּ לְהִתְמַהֵמֶה וְגַם-צִדָּה לֹא-עָשׂוּ לָהֶם

Va-yophù et-habatzèq ashèr hotzi'u mi-Mitzràyim uggàt matzòt, ki lo chamètz ki gorshù mi-Mitzràyim ve-lò yakhlù le-hitmahmèh ve-gàm tzèydah lo asù la-hèm.

So they baked yeastless flatbreads with the dough which they had brought out of Egypt, unleavened because they were expelled from Egypt without even having time to be able to prepare food.

Exodus 12v39/ שמות יב' לט

A reflection on Exodus 12.39 'The Jewish feast of Yeastless Bread connected with Passover lasts seven days, and celebrates the decisive deliverance of a whole people from mass slavery, expelled by the Egyptians with such haste that they did not even have time to let their bread rise. The 'matzah' flatbread which is now eaten during Passover and Yeastless Bread is an edible recording of that great moment; that same bread was transformed by Jesus at His last Passover with His followers into the vehicle of our participation in His saving death and resurrection, a deliverance far greater in its scope even than that of Israel from Egypt.'

οἱ δὲ ὄχλοι οἱ προάγοντες καὶ οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἔκραζον λέγοντες· ὠσαννὰ τῷ Υἱῷ Δαυΐδ· εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου· ὠσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις.

Et dhe òchli i proàgondes kai i akolouthòundes èkrazon lègondes, 'Osannà to Yiò Dhabhìd; evloyeemènos o erchòmenos en onòmati Kyriou; Osannà en tis ypsistis.'

והמון העם ההלכים לפניו ואחריו קראו לאמר הושע־נא ברוך הבא בשם יהוה הושע־נא במרומים:

Ve-hamòn ha-àm ha-holekhìm lephanàyv ve-acharàyv qare'ù, lemòr, 'Hòsha-na le-Bhèn Dabhìd; barùkh ha-bà be-shèm Adonài; Hòsha-na bamromìm.'

Then the crowd going ahead of Him and behind Him began to shout, 'Hosanna (rescue!) belongs to the Son of David; welcome is He who comes in the Lord's name; Hosanna at the highest level!'

Matthew 21.9/Μαθθαιον 21.9/מתי כא"ט

A reflection on Matthew 21.9 'As Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9.9, the people recognise the sign and welcome the arrival of their Deliverance (Hosanna means Rescue) He is the Son of David, the one who will bring not political deliverance, so fickle in its nature, but release to captive hearts, breaking the hold of death itself, deliverance 'at the highest level!'

February 1 2017 Day 32: readings today; Exodus 13:17-15:18, Matthew 21:23-46, Psalm 26:1-12, Proverbs 6:16-19

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אֶל-תִּירְאוּ--הֲתִצְבּוּ וְרִאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲשֶׁר רִאִיתֶם אֶת-מִצְרַיִם הַיּוֹם--לֹא תִסְפוּ לְרִאֲתָם עוֹד עַד-עוֹלָם

Va-yòmer Moshèh el-ha-àm, 'Al tira'ù; hit-yatzevù u-re'ù et-Yeshù'at Adonài ashèr ya'asèh lakhèm ha-yòm, ki ashèr re'item et-Mitzràyim ha'yòm lo tosiphù lir'otàm od ad-olàm.

And Moses said to the people, 'Don't be afraid; brace yourselves, and watch the rescue of the LORD that He will do for you today; for these you see, these Egyptians here today, you will never see again, forever.'

Exodus 14v13/ שמות יד' ג'

Reflection on Exodus 14.13 'One of the things God says most often to people in Scripture is 'Don't be afraid.' Perhaps that is because His actions are extraordinary and awesome, and our natural reflex is to back away. But when we engage with God, even in His fearsomeness, we touch His Fathering heart to us, and fear becomes wonder at His presence.'

ἦλθε γὰρ πρὸς ὑμᾶς Ἰωάννης ἐν ὁδοῦ δικαιοσύνης, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ· οἱ δὲ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρναι ἐπίστευσαν αὐτῷ· ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰδόντες οὐ μετεμελήθητε ὕστερον τοῦ πιστεῦσαι αὐτῷ.

Èlthe gar pros ymàs Yoànnes en odhò dhikaiosýnees, kai ouk epistèvsate avtò; i dhe telònai kai ai pòrnai epistevsan avtò; ymèes dhe idhòndes ou metemelètheete ýsteron tou pistèvsai avtò.

For John (the Baptist) came to you presenting a way of integrity, but you did not believe him; rather, the tax-gatherers and prostitutes believed him; but even following that, you did not make any change in your attitude to believing him.

Matthew 21.32/Μαθθαιον 21.32

A reflection on Matthew 21.32 'In a stand-off about authority with the religious bigwigs, Jesus shows them to be so tied to their tradition that when God does come and speak, as He did through John the Baptist, they completely miss the message, while those who recognise their need, the broken and repentant, by faith engage with God's amazing offer of forgiveness. Even though they acknowledge grudgingly John's reputation as a prophet, they have made no adjustment to their lives nor trusted God's love. Faithless religion can make us deaf to the offer of living relationship with our Redeemer and Rescuer.'

February 2 2017 Day 33: readings today; Exodus 15:19-17:7, Matthew 22:1-33, Psalm 27:1-6, Proverbs 6:20-26

וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו מִן הוּא--כִּי לֹא יָדְעוּ מִה-הוּא וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֲלֵהֶם הוּא הֲלֶחֶם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָה

Va-yir'ù bhenèy-Yisraèl va-yomrù ish el achiv, 'Man hu?', ki lo yad'ù ma hu, va-yòmer Moshèh alèyhem, 'Hu ha-lèchem ashèr natàn Adonài lakhèm le-okhlàh.

And the children of Israel looked and said to one another, 'What is it?', because they did not know what it was, so Moses said to them, 'It's the bread that the Lord has given to you to eat.'

Exodus 16v15/ שמות טז' טו

A reflection on Exodus 16.15 ‘Even though Moses has told the people of Israel that God would provide them with bread, they pick up the white flakes which have appeared overnight and ask ‘Man hu?’, that is, ‘What is it?’, from which we derive the word ‘manna’ for the miraculous food God gave. So often we miss what God has provided because we are expecting something else. In the case of the Messiah, no one was expecting a carpenter from Nazareth who would die for us on a cross, but He is the true bread from heaven who nourishes our spirit. (John 6.35)’

περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑμῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ λέγοντος· ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ Θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς Ἰακώβ· οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Θεὸς Θεὸς νεκρῶν, ἀλλὰ ζώντων.

Perì dhe tees anastàseos ton nekròn ouk anègnote to reethèn ymìn ypò tou Theòu lègondos, ‘Egò eemì o Theòs Abhra-àm kai o Theòs Isa-àk kai o Theòs Yakòbh’? Ouk èstin o Theòs Theòs nekròn, allà zòndon.’

(Jesus is addressing the Sadducees)

‘And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what God said to you when it says, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’? God is not God of the dead, but of those who are living.’

Matthew 22.31-32/Μαθθαιον 22.31-32

A reflection on Matthew 22.31-32 ‘The Sadducees denied any sort of afterlife, claiming it is not found in the Torah, defined as the five books of Moses. But Jesus comes back with the riposte that in describing Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to Moses, Exodus points to the resurrection, since God is not God of the dead but of the living, and therefore in some sense the Patriarchs, although they have experienced physical death, are included in the living. While theologians may debate whether this ongoing life of the patriarchs is current or future when Jesus is speaking, it is clear that for those who trust in the covenant of God, death cannot hold them, for they are destined for life through the resurrection of which Jesus is the guarantee by His being raised again to life!’

February 3 2017 Day 34: readings today; Exodus 17:8-19:15, Matthew 22:34-23:12, Psalm 27:7-14, Proverbs 6:27-35

וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ-לִי מַמְלַכֶּת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ אֲלֵה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבַּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
‘Ve-attèm tihyù li mamlèkhet kohanìm ve-gòy qadòsh’; èyleh ha-devarìm ashèr tedabbèr el benèy Yisra’èl.

‘And you will be for me a kingdom of priests, and a separated, holy nation’; these are the words you will speak to the sons of Israel.

Exodus 19.6/ שְׁמוֹת י"ו

A Reflection on Exodus 19.6 ‘Although the tribe of Levi was designated to serve in the Tent, the whole people of Israel were to be agents of God’s presence into creation, a priestly direct rule of the earth on God’s behalf, His original purpose for mankind. Tragically, Israel refused this call, and wanted only to hear God through intermediaries. Today God calls again for us, His people by faith, to be a kingdom of priests, those who bring in His direct rule by living yielded lives on earth, day by day.’

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔφη αὐτῷ· ἀγαπήσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου.

O dhe Yeēsous ēphee avtò, ‘Agapèesis Kýrion ton Theòn sou en òlee tee kardhìa sou, kai en òlee tee psychèe sou, kai en òlee tee dhianìa sou.

So Jesus said to him, ‘You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.’

Matthew 22.37/Μαθθαιου 22.37

A reflection on Matthew 22.37 ‘In responding to the Pharisee, Jesus was quoting the most well-known directive of the Torah, from Deuteronomy 6.5. As a Jew writing to Jews, Matthew gives it in the form known to Jews, a threefold call to love the Lord God with all of the heart, soul and strength. As followers of Jesus, this ancient call to Israel is still ours, and overrides all other concerns and demands, leading us to love our neighbour. But the Lord is the sole focus of our worship and attention.’

February 4 2017 Day 35: readings today; Exodus 19:16-21:21, Matthew 23:13-39, Psalm 28:1-9, Proverbs 7:1-5

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר-אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ וְנִשְׁמָעָה וְאֶל-יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים פֶּן-נָמוּת

Va-yomrù el-Moshèh, ‘Dabbèr àttah immànu ve-nishma’ah, ve-àl yedabbèr immànu Elohim, pen namòot.’

And they (the people of Israel) said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will listen, but don’t let God speak with us, in case we die.’

Exodus 20.19/ שְׁמוֹת כ"ט

A reflection on Exodus 20.19 ‘This is an intensely tragic moment for God and His people. Having so powerfully delivered them from slavery, and brought them into His very presence at Sinai, the people reject His speaking to them directly, asking instead for Moses to be their intermediary. From this time on, Israel hears God through prophets, judges, kings and priests, but it will not be until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 that God comes to speak again directly to all of His people, when He resides in them at last, unmediated by men, in fulfilment of the promises in Jeremiah 31.34 and Joel 2.28.’

יְהוָה, עֲזִי וּמִגְנִי בּוֹ בָטַח לִבִּי וְנִעְזַרְתִּי
וַיִּעְלֹז לִבִּי וּמִשִּׁירֵי אֲהוֹדְנֶנּוּ

Adonài uzzi u-maginì , bo bhotàch libbi ve-ne’ezàrti, va-ya’alòz libbi u-mishirì ahodènnu.

The LORD is my strength and my shield, my heart relies on Him and receives help; also, my heart jumps for joy and sings out thanksgiving to Him!

Psalm 28.7/ תהילים כח"ז

A reflection on Psalm 28.7 ‘Knowing that we have a constant resource in the living God is a cause for elation! Even in trouble, in the midst of battle and struggle, He is shielding and strengthening us. Those who drink from this well of hope know there is refreshment here as from no other source on earth.’

February 5 2017 Day 36: readings today; Exodus 21:22-23:13, Matthew 24:1-28, Psalm 29:1-11, Proverbs 7:6-23

וְשֹׁחַד לֹא תִקַּח כִּי הַשְׁחָד יַעְוֶר פְּקָחִים וַיְסַלֵּף דְּבָרֵי צְדִיקִים

Ve-shochàd lo tiqqàch, ki ha-shochàd ye-avver piqechìm vi-salèph dibhrèy tzaddiqìm.

And you will not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds insight and perverts words of integrity.

Exodus 23.8/ שְׁמוֹת כ"ח

February 5 2017 Day 36: readings today; Exodus 21:22-23:13, Matthew 24:1-28, Psalm 29:1-11, Proverbs 7:6-23

A reflection on Exodus 23.8 ‘The directives of God to the people of Israel are their first national law-code, placing limitations on their behaviour. They are full of principles of restorative action as well as retribution, God’s justice being about re-ordering what has been disordered and keeping chaos out. One of the things God outlaws is bribing to get an unjust outcome. In a world of so much corruption, money talks, but talks dirty. The bribe blinds insight and perverts integrity; it is to be seen as an unacceptable evil among God’s people.’

καὶ διὰ τὸ πληθυνθῆναι τὴν ἀνομίαν ψυχῆσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν πολλῶν.

Kai dhià tò plethynthènai teen anomìan, psiyèsetai ee agàpee ton pollòn.

And because of the increasing anarchy, the selfless love of many will grow cold.

Matthew 24.12/Μαθθαιον 24.12

A reflection on Matthew 24.12 ‘Far from predicting a future of inexorable delight due to human progress and so-called liberalisation, Jesus presages a world in which enmity and selfishness will increase. The breaking away from God’s founding principles will result, says Jesus, in even those who loved Him at first cooling in their commitment and their devotion to Him and His ways. The antidote will not be human rule, but the coming of His reign, with the ultimate transformation of all things.’

February 6 2017 Day 37: readings today; Exodus 23:14-25:40, Matthew 24:29-51, Psalm 30:1-12, Proverbs 7:24-27

וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַדָּם וַיִּזְרֹק עַל-הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה דַם-הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם עַל כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה

Va-yiqqàch Moshèh et-ha-dàm va-yizròq al-ha-àm va-yomèr, ‘Hinèh dam ha-berit ashèr karàt Adonài immakhèm al kol ha-debharim ha-èleh.’

And Moses took the blood and scattered it over the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has cut with you concerning all these things He has declared.’

Exodus 24.8/שמות כד"ח

A reflection on Exodus 24.8 ‘Just as covenant-makers would stand between two halves of a sacrifice to make their vows, the Lord has Moses take two halves of the blood of this covenant sacrifice, one poured on the altar, to implicate God and the other scattered over the people of Israel. They are now corporately bound in ‘hesed’ commitment to the living God, and He to them.’

καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ τότε κόψονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὄψονται τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς.

Kai tòte phanèsetai to seemèion tou Yiòu tou anthròpou en to ouranò, kai tòte kòpsontai pàsai ai phylài tees yees kai òpsondai ton Yiòn tou anthròpou erchòmenon epì ton nephelòn tou ourandou metà dynàmeos kai dòxees pollèes.

And then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in the sky, and then all the peoples of earth will grieve at the sight of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the sky with power and great majesty.

Matthew 24.30/Μαθθαιον 24.30

A reflection on Matthew 24.30 ‘In our so-called enlightened age, we tend to skirt around the more apocalyptic sections of Jesus’ teachings, for they seem fantastic and far-fetched; yet Jesus likens the day of His certain, visible coming down the skies in glory to the coming of the flood, when people ignored Noah’s eccentric ark-building and perished as a result. Jesus describes His coming as a day of remorse, when the faithless world realises its rejection of Him is the rejection of its Rescuer. The call now is to come to the Son of Man and trust His word, so as not to be left outside the ark again.’

February 7 2017 Day 38 Readings; Exodus 26:1-27:21, Matthew 25:1-30, Psalm 31:1-8, Proverbs 8:1-11

וַנָּתַתְּ אֶת-הַכַּפֹּרֶת עַל אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת--בְּקֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים

Ve-natàta et-ha-kappòret al aròn ha-edùt be-qòdesh ha-qodashìm.

And you will place the covering on the box-chest of witness in the holiest of holy places.

Exodus 26.34/שמות כו"לד

A reflection on Exodus 26.34 ‘The directions for the construction of the Tent of Meeting, where God would camp with Israel are highly detailed; it is designed to be a mobile work of exquisite craftsmanship, as a place of encounter for the Lord with His people, right down to the silver sockets on each board forming the body of the tent itself, meaning that each board could stand alone when all the others had been taken down around it. Amidst the instructions comes the call to place the covering (sometimes known in English as the ‘mercy-seat’) on the box-chest of witness (the ark), to be set in the most special of special places in the Tent, the veiled-off section where God would dwell in His glory. Here, once a year, the High Priest will bring the blood of atonement and sprinkle it, a sign of the coming Lamb of God whose blood would bring to fulfilment all that the Tent of meeting in the desert points to.’

ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ· εὖ, δοῦλε ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστέ· ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἦς πιστός, ἐπὶ πολλῶν σε καταστήσω· εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν χαρὰν τοῦ κυρίου σου.

Èphee avtò o Kýrios avtòu, ‘Ev, dhòole agathè kai pistè; epi olìgha ees pistòs, epi pollòn se katastèso: èselthe ees teen charàn tou kyriou soo.’

His Lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you have been faithful with a little, so I will appoint you over much: enter into the joy of your Lord.’

Matthew 25.23/Μαθθαιον 25.23

A reflection on Matthew 25.23. ‘The Lord does not ask of us success, but faithfulness. Most of us have not been given responsibility over great matters, but all of us have the call to give to the Lord some return on His investment in us by fruitfulness in the area He has gifted to us. Simple things done faithfully and attentively bring honour to Jesus.’

February 8 2017 Day 39 Readings; Exodus 28:1-43, Matthew 25:31-26:13, Psalm 31:9-18, Proverbs 8:12-13

וְנָשָׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת-שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחֹשֶׁן הַמִּשְׁפָּט עַל-לִבּוֹ--בְּבָאֵל אֶל-הַקְּדוֹשׁ לְזָכָר
לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה תָּמִיד

Ve-nasàh Aharòn et-shemòt benèy Yisraèl be-chòshen ha-mishpàt al-libbò be-bho-ò el-ha-qòdesh le-zikkaròn liphnèy Adonài tamìd.

And Aaron carried the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of right-wising over his heart whenever he went into the sanctuary, as a constant reminder before the face of the Lord.

Exodus 28v29/שמות כח"כט

A reflection on Exodus 28.29 ‘When the High Priest went before the very face of God once a year, he carried over his heart the breastplate of *‘mishpat’*, of God’s commitment to act to restore reality to its moral axis, ‘right-wising’, in the old English term. The names of the tribes are brought before God, keeping them fresh in his memory, pointing to the day when the final sacrifice in the Lamb of God would bring the once-for-all release of Israel and the the age of God’s forever Kingship on earth.’

προσηλθεν αὐτῷ γυνή ἀλάβαστρον μύρου ἔχουσα βαρυτίμου, καὶ κατέχεεν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου.

Prosèlthen avtò yinèe alàbhastron mýrou èchousa bharytìμου, kai katèche-en epì teen kephalèen avtòu anakeemènou.

A woman came to Him with an alabaster container of highly valuable perfumed oil, and she poured it out over His head while He was relaxing at table.

Matthew 26.7/Μαθθαιου 26.7

A reflection on Matthew 26.7 ‘The reaction of Jesus’ apprentice-followers to the woman’s pouring out of the costly perfume over the Lord’s head is a classic example of knowing the cost of something without knowing its value. All too often we betray our own materialism when we grade worth in terms of monetary cost alone; but Jesus makes clear that this woman’s sacrifice is deeply significant in His unfolding passion, and will be recounted long after the event is past. She pours out the most precious thing she has, possibly her dowry, over the most precious head there has ever been; she knows His worth surpasses all measure of the cost.’

February 9 2017 Day 40 Readings; Exodus 29:1-30:10, Matthew 26:14-46, Psalm 31:19-24, Proverbs 8:14-26

וְקִדַּשְׁתִּי אֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת-אֶהֱרָן וְאֶת-בָּנָיו אֲקַדְּשׁ לְכַהֵן לִי וְיִשְׁכְּנֹתִי בְּתוֹךְ
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים

Ve-qidàshti et-òhel mo’èd ve-èt ha-mizbèach ve-èt Aharòn ve-èt banàyv aqadèsh le-khohèn li. Ve-shakhànti be-tòkh benèy Yisra’èl ve-hayìti lahèm l’Elohim.

And I will make unique to Myself the Tent of Encounter and the altar, and I will make the sole identity of Aaron and his sons to be priest-agents for me. Moreover, I will reside in the midst of Israel and I will be be God to them.

Exodus 29v44,45/מ"ד מה/שמות כט"ד

A reflection on Exodus 29.44-45 ‘In our familiarity with the term, we have overlooked what it means for God to ‘sanctify’ something or someone. It means, of course, to render it holy – that is, for one sole purpose alone, with no other claims or rivals for its use. This is because God is holy – unrivalled, totally unique in His being. Thus, everything He touches and calls becomes infused with His nature. The Tent of Encounter, the altar, and especially Aaron and his sons, the priests, become agents of God’s kingship in the middle of Israel, serving in the very embassy of heaven where God has decided to take up residence among His chosen people.’

τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ αἷμά μου τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

Tòuto gàr-esti to àima moo to tees kainèes dhiathèেকেes to perì pollòn enchynòmenon ees àphesin amatìon.

For this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Matthew 26.28/Μαθθαιου 26.28

A reflection on Matthew 26.28 'As Moses had scattered half of the blood of the covenant sacrifice on the people, proclaiming them covenanted by it to the Lord, so Jesus now implicates His people in His own sacrifice and suffering by sharing the covenant cup with them; Pesach, Passover, now speaks of the deliverance not only of Israel from Egypt, but of all mankind from the tyranny of evil, through Messiah Jesus.'

February 10 2017 Day 41; Readings Exodus 30:11-31:18, Matthew 26:47-68, Psalm 32:1-11, Proverbs 8:27-32

רָאָה קָרָאתִי בְשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן-אוּרִי בֶן-חֹר לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה וְאִמְלֵא אֶתְּנוּ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
בְּחִכְמָהּ וּבְתַבּוּנָהּ וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל-מְלָאכָה

Re'èh, qaràti bhe-shèm Betzal'èl ben-Ûri ben-Chùr le-mattèh Yehudàh va-amalèh otò Rùach Elohìm be-chokhmàh u-vi-tebhunàh u-ve-da'at u-ve-khòl melakhàh

Look, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Chur of the tribe of Judah and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with discernment and with knowledge in all kinds of craftsmanship.

Exodus 31v2, 3/ ג שמות לא"ב

A reflection on Exodus 31.2-3 'Here is the first record of the Spirit of God, the one who brooded over the pre-creation chaos, empowering a human being. Bezalel has the Author of the plans of the tabernacle, God Himself, guiding his hand and his eye to produce an earthly icon of heaven's worship, which will be inhabited by the presence of God among His people.'

τότε λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀπόστρεψόν σου τὴν μάχαιράν εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς· πάντες γὰρ οἱ λαβόντες μάχαιραν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποθανοῦνται.

Tòte lèyee avtò o Yeesòus, 'apòstrepson sou teen màchairàn-ees ton tòpon avtèes; pàndes gar i labhòndes màchairan en machàiree apothanòundai.'

Then Jesus said to him (Peter), 'Put your sword back in its place; for everyone who takes up the sword shall be destroyed by the sword.'

Matthew 26.52/Μαθθαιον 26.52

A reflection on Matthew 26.52 'When Peter reaches for his sword to defend Jesus against His apprehenders, the Lord commands him to put it away. Violence begets violence, and those enmeshed in it can therefore expect a violent end. In the world of the first century, particularly in a Jewish context, this was unexpected. Yet with His words, Jesus calls for an extreme love, a radical non-violence which many followers of Jesus have taken as a call to foreswear war and armed resistance. We are called to wage peace, not war.'

February 11 2017 Day 42; Readings Exodus 32:1-33:23, Matthew 26:69-27:14, Psalm 33:1-11, Proverbs 8:33-36

וַיֹּמֶר פָּנַי יֵלְכוּ וְהִנַּחְתִּי לָךְ
וַיֹּמֶר אֵלָיו אִם-אֵין פָּנֶיךָ הֹלְכִים אֶל-תַּעֲלֵנוּ מִזֶּה

Va-yòmer, 'Panài yelèkhu va-hanichotì lakh.'

Va-yòmer elàyv, 'Im eyn panèkha holekhim al ta'alèynu mi-zèh.

And (God) said, 'My Presence-Face will travel with you and bring you to your settled place.'

And he (Moses) said to Him, 'If Your Presence-Face does not travel with us, don't take us any further than this.'

Exodus 33v14, 15/ טו שמות לג"יד

A reflection on Exodus 33.14,15 'There is no separate word for 'presence' in Hebrew; it is always the word 'panim', meaning 'face'. When the Lord threatens not to go personally with His people, for fear of wiping them out in their waywardness, Moses appeals to Him to relent, for he knows that without His presence, they will only be a right-living people who know how to suffer well. God's presence is never faceless; it is never a 'force' or an 'energy'. We only ever meet Him in person, and for us, most obviously, we meet Him in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made visible, God made human, who travels with us and brings us to our rest. When His face shines upon us, heaven breaks in and all is transformed.'

‘Ο δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔστη ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἡγεμόνος· καὶ ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν ὁ ἡγεμὼν λέγων· σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔφη αὐτῷ· σὺ λέγεις.

O dhe Isòus èstee èmprosthen tou eeyemònos; kai epeeròtesen avtòn o eeyemòn lèghon, ‘Sy ee o bhasilèvs ton Ioudhàion?’ O dhe Isòus èphee avtó, ‘Sy lèyis.’

Then Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor interrogated him, saying, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ Then Jesus answered him, ‘You are saying so.’

Matthew 27.11/Μαθθαιον 27.11

A reflection on Matthew 27.11 ‘The title ‘King of the Jews’ was a controversial one in the time of the passion story, since King Herod Antipas had been given the title, even though he was not a native Jew. His father, Herod the Great, was the son of an Edomite, and thus was never fully accepted by many in Israel. Furthermore, the title was conferred by the Roman Emperor, Augustus, making Herod a puppet king. Thus, Pilate, in laying this name on Jesus, is rather mocking Him. Jesus does not rise to the bait, nor claim the dubious accolade, but puts it back at Pilate’s door, His divine wisdom above such jibes.’

February 12 2017 Day 43; Readings Exodus 34:1-35:9, Matthew 27:15-31, Psalm 33:12-22, Proverbs 9:1-6

וַיֹּארוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-פְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְהִשִּׁיב מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַמָּסָוָה עַל-פְּנָיו
עד-באו לדבר אתו

Va-yar’ù venèy Yisraèl et-penèy Moshèh ki qaràn or penèy Moshèh ve-heyshiv Moshèh et-ha-masvèh al-panàyv ad-bo’ò le-dabbèr ittò

And the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, and that the skin of Moses' face was shining, so Moses put back the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him

Exodus 34v35 / שמות לד" לה

A reflection on Exodus 34.35 ‘In Exodus 3, Moses turned away because he was afraid to look into God’s face. Now, on the mountain of encounter, he is unafraid to gaze into the glory of the Lord’s countenance, which is His very presence in person. By this intimacy Moses is changed, literally, physically. His flesh glows with the reflected light of his Maker’s face, as he comes down, causing the people to be in awe, wanting him to cover up the radiance. ‘But we, with unveiled faces, all reflect the Lord’s glory, being changed into His likeness, with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.’(2 Cor.3.18)

καὶ πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ κάλαμον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ, καὶ γονυπετήσαντες ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ ἐνέπαιζον αὐτῷ λέγοντες· χαῖρε ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων·

Kai plèxandes stèphanon ex akanthòn, epètheekan epì teen kephalèen avtòu kai kàlamon epì teen dhexiàn avtòu, kai gonypetèesandes èmbrosthen avtòu enèpaizon avtò, lègondes, 'Chàire, o bhasilèvs ton Ioudhàion!'

And plaiting a crown out of thorns, they put it on His head and put a stick in His right hand, and kneeling before Him, they jeered Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

Matthew 27.29/Μαθθαιον 27.29

A reflection on Matthew 27.29 'O sacred head sore wounded/With pain and grief weighed down;/How mockingly surrounded/With thorns, Thine only crown.' These words of deep pathos capture the horror of the sight of the Son of God, abused and derided by His creatures, and yet also reveal the depth of His love and compassion for our lostness. The Roman squaddies use the politically-charged term, 'King of the Jews', as does Pilate later above Jesus' dying head, as a swipe at the Roman puppet-ruler, Herod, whom the Jews themselves never fully acknowledged as one of them. Yet Jesus, in His suffering, epitomises the pain and agony of all of God's rejected people. He is, indeed, the King of the Jews.'

February 13 2017 Day 44; Readings Exodus 35:10-36:38, Matthew 27:32-66, Psalm 34:1-10, Proverbs 9:7-8

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לְאָמַר מְרַבִּים הָעַם לְהַבִּיא מִדֵּי הָעֲבֹדָה לְמַלְאכָה אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ

Va-yomeru el-Moshèh leymòr, 'Marbim ha-àm le-habhì midèy ha-abhodàh la-malakhàh ashèr tzivàh Adonài la-assòt otàh.'

And they (Bezalel and the workers on the Tabernacle) said to Moses, 'The people are bringing much more than is needed for carrying out the work that the Lord has directed.'

Exodus 36v5 /ה' שמות לו"ה

A reflection on Exodus 36.5 'It's hard to imagine such a statement as this being in heard in the work of the Lord today; 'the people are bringing more than enough for the work the Lord has directed'! The generosity and liberality of the people of Israel was so great, that they are actually told to stop giving because there was an excess! (Ex.36.6,7) When heaven touches earth, when God encounters His people, the resourcing of His calling is plentiful and more than enough.'

ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι· εἰ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐστι, καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ πιστεύσομεν ἐπ' αὐτῷ·

'Àllous èsosen, eavtòn ou dhýnatai sòsai! Ee bhasilèvs Israèel esti, katabhàto nyn apò tou stavròu kai pistèvsomen ep avtò.'

אֶת־אֲחֵרִים הוֹשִׁיעַ וְלַעֲצָמוֹ לֹא יוֹכֵל לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶם־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא יִרְד־נָא עִתָּהּ בּוֹ הַצְלוּב וְנֹאמִין בּוֹ

Et-acherim hoshìa, u-le'atzmò lo yukhàl le-hoshìa! Im mèlekh Yisraèl hu, yerèd-na min ha-tzelùbh ve-na'amìn bo.'

'He saved others, but he cannot save Himself! If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe in Him.'

Matthew 27.42/Μαθθαιον 27.42

A reflection on Matthew 27.42. ‘Jesus’ very name, Yeshua in Aramaic and Hebrew, means ‘He will rescue.’ The chief priests, scribes and elders who mock Jesus here acknowledge that He has been doing just that! ‘He has saved others’ they say. They have missed the work of the Spirit in Him, and like their forefathers before them, have hardened their hearts to God’s provision. As they mock Him, Yeshua is rescuing them; as they taunt Him, He is saving them. As Sha’ul-Paul, the Pharisee-turned-Jesus follower would later write, ‘Had they known (the wisdom of God), they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.’ (1 Cor. 2.8) God has counted on their stiff necks to achieve His redemptive purpose!

February 14 2017 Day 45; Readings Exodus 37:1-38:31, Matthew 28:1-20, Psalm 34:11-22, Proverbs 9:9-10

וַיְהִי הַכְּרֻבִּים פָּרְשֵׁי כַנְּפֵיהֶם לְמַעַל הַסִּכּוּכִים בְּכַנְּפֵיהֶם עַל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת וּפְנֵיהֶם אִישׁ אֶל-אַחֻיו
אֶל-הַכַּפֹּרֶת--הָיוּ פְּנֵי הַכְּרֻבִּים

Va-yehì ha-kerubhìm porshèy khenaphàyim le-ma’làh sokhekhìm be-khanphèyhem al ha-kappòret ish el-achìv, el ha-kappòret, hayù penèy ha-kerubhìm.

And the Throne-Angels (Cherubim) were spreading out their wings upward, by them overarching the Covering, facing each other, with either Throne-Angel facing inward towards the Covering.

Exodus 37v9 / שמות לז"ט

A reflection on Exodus 37.9 ‘There is much debate among scholars about the nature of the ‘Cherubim’ whose image was carved over the Covering of the Box-Chest of the Covenant. Gesenius, the German Hebrew scholar, links them to the fourfold living creatures described in Ezekiel, who bear the throne of God, powerful angelic beings closest to Him. In Genesis, they are placed as guard over the tree of life. Here, they are set into and over the Covering as a sign that the LORD Himself will make this Box-Chest His throne, dwelling among His people, and will there cover their sin through atonement, prefigured each year in the sprinkling of blood, achieved once for all in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.’

ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπε ταῖς γυναῖξιν· μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε· οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπε. δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο ὁ Κύριος.

Apokrithis dhe o àngelos èpe tais yinaixi, ‘Mee phobhèesthe ymèes; idha gar òti Iesòun ton estavromènon zeetèete; ouk èstin òdhe, eeyèrthee gar kathòs èpe. Dhèvte idhete ton tòpon òπου èkeeto o Kýrios.

In reply, then the angel said to the women, ‘Don’t be afraid; for I know that it’s Jesus the crucified one you are looking for; He’s not here, for He is risen, as He said He would. Come and see the place where He lay.’

Matthew 28.5,6/Μαθθαιον 28.5,6

A reflection on Matthew 28.5,6. ‘This is the outrageous hope of Jesus-believers. We have not to fear, because Jesus who was crucified is risen from the dead, and promises we will rise with Him. The messenger of God entrusts the most stupendous news the world has ever heard to the faithful women – to women, whose testimony in those times was not even permitted in a court of law! This affirms that this new era in human history will not be one of division and oppression, but will turn upside-down the pecking orders, for this is the start of all things becoming new!’

February 15 2017 Day 46 Readings Exodus 39:1-40:38, Mark 1:1-28, Psalm 35:1-16, Proverbs 9:11-12

וַיִּכַּס הָעֶנָן אֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה מְלֵא אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְלֹא-יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָּבוֹא אֶל-אֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד כִּי-שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעֶנָן וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה מְלֵא אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן

Va-yekhàs he-anàn et-ohèl mo'èd, u-khebhòd Adonài malè et-ha-mishkàn ve-lo yakhòl
Moshèh labhò el-ohèl mo'èd, ki shakhàn alàyv he-anàn u-khebhòd Adonài, malè et-ha-
mishkàn

And the cloud billowed out over the tent of gathering, and the glory of the LORD filled His dwelling-place and Moses could not go into the tent of gathering, because the cloud and the glory of the LORD were resting upon it, filling the dwelling-place

Exodus 40v34, 35/לה לד מ" שמות

A reflection on Exodus 40.34 ‘The word ‘glory’ in Hebrew is directly derived from the word for weight or gravity. When God comes close in His full weight, his ‘kabhod’, the very atmosphere around us changes. In the case of the Lord’s arrival in the tent of meeting, the place was so full of God that Moses could not approach. But in Jesus Christ, we touch the manifest glory of God revealed in His life and by His Spirit to us now.’

Περιπατῶν δὲ παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶδε Σίμωνα καὶ Ἀνδρέαν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, βάλλοντας ἀμφίβληστρον ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ· ἦσαν γὰρ ἀλιεῖς· καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς γενέσθαι ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων.

Peripatòn dhe parà teen thàlassan tees Galilaias, èedhe Simona kai Andrèan ton adhelphòn avtòu, bhàllondas amphìbhleestron en tee thalàsee; èesan gar alièes. Kai èepen avtìs o Yèesous, ‘Dhèvte opìso mou kai pi-èeso ymàs yenèsthai alièes anthròpon.

Walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting their nets into the sea, as they were fishermen; and Jesus said to them ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people instead!’

Mark 1.16,17/Μαρκου 1.16,17

A reflection on Mark 1.16,17 ‘Given that these are the first words of calling Jesus said to His disciples, they are quite strange in their invitation: ‘Follow me, and you will fish for people’! It is probable, given the stir caused already by John the Baptist and then Jesus of Nazareth that these working men were aware of the message being proclaimed of a new start for anyone who would believe the good news of the arrival of God as King in Israel. Now here was Jesus Himself, calling them to be part of His apostolic team, to be mentored and shaped by Him, to be with Him, with the purpose of bringing transformation to the people and new encounters with God. They give up everything and surrender to the world-shaking adventure with Jesus the Messiah. Will we do the same?’

February 16 2017 Day 47 Readings Leviticus 1:1-3:17, Mark 1:29-2:12, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 9:13-18

וְהַנּוֹתֵרֶת מִן-הַמִּנְחָה--לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו קֹדֶשׁ קֹדָשִׁים מֵאִשֵּׁי יְהוָה
Ve-ha-notèret min ha-minchàh le-Aharòn u-lebhanàyv; qòdesh qodashìm mé-ishèy Adonài.

And the remainder of the offering is for Aaron and his sons, particularly special as part of the fire-offerings reserved for the Lord alone.

Leviticus 2.3/ג"ב ויקרא

A reflection on Leviticus 2.3 ‘As the long code of instructions for the rites of sacrifice at the altar unfolds, it is clear that the Lord is caring for those whom He has tasked with the service of His dwelling-place among Israel, the Levites. While some offerings are to be completely burned before the Lord, some of the meat produced from other rituals is to be food for Aaron and his sons. It is still to be treated as under the Lord’s sole right of disposal, but it is shared with His servants; they partake of the good things given to God.’

Καὶ πρωὶ ἔννοχα λίαν ἀναστὰς ἐξῆλθε καὶ ἀπῆλθεν εἰς ἔρημον τόπον, κακεῖ προσήχето.
Kai proi ènnycha lian anastàs exèlthe kai apèlthen ees èreemon tòpon, kakèe proseeýcheto.
And in the morning, having got up a good while before first light, he went out, off to a deserted place, where He was praying.
Mark 1.35/Μαρκον 1.35

A reflection on Mark 1.35 ‘Jesus gives priority in the midst of a pressured life to quality time alone with His Father. This whole chapter seems breathless with activity, but the writer is careful to highlight the Lord’s intentionality in spending intimate time with the One on whose voice He depends. If Jesus, Son of the Living God, refused to let business crowd out His space for prayer, we need to find ways of keeping time with His rhythm, until it becomes the beat of our own heart also.’

February 17 2017 Day 48 Readings Leviticus 4:1-5:19, Mark 2:13-3:6, Psalm 36:1-12, Proverbs 10:1-2

וְאִם-לֹא תִשִּׁיג יָדוֹ לְשֵׁתֵי תֹרִים אוֹ לְשֵׁנֵי בְּנֵי-יוֹנָה--וְהֵבִיא אֶת-קֶרְבָּנוֹ אֶשֶׁר חֻטָּא עַשִּׂירֵת
וְהֵאֱפָה סֹלֶת לְחֻטָּאת לֹא-יִשִּׂים עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֹא-יִתֵּן עָלֶיהָ לְבֹנָה--כִּי חֻטָּאת הוּא
Ve-ìm lo tasìg yaddò lishtèy torìm o lishnèy bhenèy yonàh, ve-heybhì et-qorbanò ashèr chatà
asirìt ha-eyphàh sòlet le-chatàt; lo yasìm alèyha shèmen ve-lò yittèn alèyha lebhonàh, ki
chatàt hi.

But if two pigeons or two doves is beyond his reach, let him bring as his offering for sin a tenth of an ephah (about a kilogram) of flour; he is not to add any oil or incense to it, for it is a sin-offering.

Leviticus 5.11/ויקרא ה"א

A reflection on Leviticus 5.11 ‘It is notable that in the directives for sin offerings, the Lord’s compassion is careful not to oppress the poor in the expectation of what they can bring to Him. In the case of offerings for sin, those able to are to bring a lamb or a kid (Lev.5.6); for those for whom this would be unaffordable, two birds are substituted – it’s of note that Mary and Joseph bring two birds as their offering when presenting Jesus in Luke 2.24. This latter provision, therefore, is for those who have very little. They are called on to bring just a bag of flour to give to the Lord, and this is accepted as the limit of their ability. God is not looking to accumulate from us, nor to crush us, but He is looking for sacrificial living from His people.’

πῶς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἀβιάθαρ ἀρχιερέως καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς
προθέσεως ἔφαγεν, οὓς οὐκ ἔξεστι φαγεῖν εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσι, καὶ ἔδωκε καὶ τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ
οὔσι;

Pos eesèlthen ees ton èkon tou Theou epì Abhiàthar archierèos kai tous àrtous tees
prothèseos èphayen, ous ouk èxesti phayìn ei mee tis ierèvsi, kai èdhoke kai tis syn avtῶ òusi.
(Have you not read of David) How he went into the house of God when Abiathar was high
priest and ate the bread of the presence, which was not supposed to be eaten except by the
priests, and gave it to those who were with him?

Mark 2.26/Μαρκον 2.26

A reflection on Mark 2.26. ‘Jesus points out to the legalistic Pharisees who are troubling His disciples for rubbing ears of corn to eat on the Sabbath that even the great King David did not keep to Torah entirely, being given the prohibited sacred bread of the presence (in Hebrew, ‘face-bread’) when he and his men were in dire need. Jesus makes clear here that the subversive twisting of God’s wholesome teaching and direction through human vindictiveness into something vicious, ungracious and oppressive is not to be tolerated.’

February 18 2017 Day 49 Readings Leviticus 6:1-7:27, Mark 3:7-30, Psalm 37:1-11, Proverbs 10:3-4

καὶ ἐποίησε δώδεκα, ἵνα ὄσι μετ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ αὐτοὺς κηρύσσειν
Kai epieese dhòdheka, ina òsi met’ avtòu kai ina apostèllee avtòus keerýsin.
And He designated twelve to be with Him and to send them out as heralds.
Mark 3.14/Μαρκov 3.14

A reflection on Mark 3.14 ‘Jesus takes twelve disciples and makes them apostles. The first part of His intention is for them to be with Him. One of the key aspects of being ambassadors to Jesus and serving His plan is being with Him. The disciples were seeing Him at first hand, close up. Then Jesus sends them as apostles, emissaries, to imitate Him and to do what they have seen Him doing – they are the proclaimers of His arrival, the heralds of His presence with the authority of the one great Apostle of the Father. (Heb.3.1)’

וְעֲנִיִּים יִרְשׁוּ-אֶרֶץ וְהִתְעַבְּגוּ עַל-רַב שְׁלוֹם

Va-anavim yirshù àretz, ve-hit’angù al robh shalom.
The lowly shall inherit the earth and will enjoy great wholeness .
Psalm 37.11/תהילים לז"א

A reflection on Psalm 37.11 ‘When Jesus teaches His disciples in Matthew 5.5 that ‘the meek will inherit the earth’, He is echoing the words of the Psalmist. The context of this promise the Singer sings to Israel is an appeal not to get concerned about the seeming progress of the worldling, whose materialism will not bring long-term security. God’s people can rest in His provision, not so much of transient ‘stuff’, but of a deep and purposeful wholeness, conveyed in the full roundedness of the Hebrew word ‘shalom’.

February 19 2017 Day 50 Readings Leviticus 7:28-9:6, Mark 3:31-4:25, Psalm 37:12-29, Proverbs 10:5

וַיִּצֶק מִשֶּׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה עַל רֹאשׁ אַהֲרֹן וַיִּמְשַׁח אֹתוֹ לְקָדְשׁוֹ

Va-yitzòq mi-shemèn al rosh Aharòn va-yimshàch otò le-qadshò.
And he poured the oil over the head of Aaron and anointed him to mark him out as uniquely distinct (holy).
Leviticus 8.12/ויקרא ח"ב

A reflection on Leviticus 8.12 ‘The sign of oil poured on the head of Moses’ brother Aaron marks him out as uniquely designated as the agent of God to the people and for the people to God. He is not holy because of what he does, but because of who has set His mark upon him. The word ‘anointed’ in Hebrew, ‘mashiach’, also attaches to the One to come, who would be the great mediator of the New Covenant between Israel and the Lord. He is the end of the line of High Priests, and stands now in the Father’s presence, Jesus our Rescuer, presenting there the sacrifice of His own life, marked out by the Father as the Holy One for all time.’

אגר בקיץ בן משכיל נרדם בקציר בן מביש

Òger ba-qàyitz, ben maskìl; nirdàm ba-qatzir, ben meybhìsh.

The son who reaps in summer is successful; the son who sleeps through the harvest is an embarrassment.

Proverbs 10.5/ה"ה/משלי

A reflection on Proverbs 10.5 ‘The Proverbs are always practical. The ancient wisdom calling from its pages is unflinching in its comparison of good with evil, and the ways of fruitfulness with the ways of wastefulness. The message here for the one being formed by the father’s words is that industry is worthy, while indolence is shameful. As followers of our heavenly Father, we cannot help but recall Jesus’ words concerning the plentiful harvest and the scarcity of labour. Will we be faithful or an embarrassment to Him?’

February 20 2017 Day 51 Readings Leviticus 9:7-10:20, Mark 4:26-5:20, Psalm 37:30-40, Proverbs 10:6-7

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת-הַעֹלָה וְאֶת-הַחֲלִבִּים וַיִּרְא כָל-הָעָם וַיִּרְנוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם

Va-tetzèh eysh mi-liphnèy Adonài va-tokhàl al-ha-mizbè’ach et-ha-olàh ve-et-ha-chalabhìm; va-yàr kol-ha-àm, va-yarònu va-yippelù al-penèyhem.

And fire went out from the presence of the LORD and consumed both offering and fat upon the altar and the people saw this, and with a shout, fell down on their faces.

Leviticus 9.24/ט"ד/ויקרא

A reflection on Leviticus 9.24 ‘Because the word ‘presence’ is actually the word ‘face’ in Hebrew, this consuming fire comes from His countenance; it is the sign of His nearness, and this is why the people go flat out before God – they know His personal presence is near them. When the Holy Spirit comes in Acts 2, fire is the sign of His presence filling the followers of Jesus. The fire makes us radiant, but burns up the dead ‘flesh’ that we need to let go of.’

καὶ διεγερθεὶς ἐπέτιμησε τῷ ἀνέμῳ καὶ εἶπε τῇ θαλάσσει· σιώπα, πεφίμωσο. καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος, καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη.

Kai dhieyerthìs epetìmeese to anèmo kai èpe tee thalàssee, 'Siòpa! Pephìmoso!' Kai ekòpasen o ànemos, kai eyèneto galèenee megàlee.

And getting up, He vetoed the wind and said to the sea, 'Silence! Shut up!' And the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.

Mark/Μαρκον 4.39

A reflection on Mark 4 .39 ‘Jesus stands up and shuts down the storm, saying Silence, be muzzled (and stay muzzled!) (Greek *siòpa, pephìmoso!*) It is as though He is speaking to an unruly dog, which obeys His voice. Jesus then rebukes their little faith, leaving them astounded at His power over nature.’

שְׁמֹר תָּם וְרָאָה יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי-אַחֲרִית לְאִישׁ שְׁלֹמֹם

Shemòr tam u-re’èh yashàr, ki acharit le-ish shalòm.

Take note of the person of integrity, the one who does right, for the legacy of that person’s life will be wholeness.

Psalm 37.37/לז"ל/תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 37.37 ‘However much faithless humanity glamorises evil and claims it doesn’t matter who breaks what, the life lived well in touch with God’s heart is a life whose outcome is wholeness and peace. The Singer here celebrates the faithful, urging the hearer to learn from their model rather than the unstable and erratic ways of the godless.’

February 21 2017 Day 52 Readings Leviticus 11:1-12:8, Mark 5:21-43, Psalm 38:1-22, Proverbs 10:8-9

καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέστη τὸ κοράσιον καὶ περιεπάτει· ἦν γὰρ ἐτῶν δώδεκα. καὶ ἐξέστησαν ἐκστάσει μεγάλη. καὶ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἵνα μηδεὶς γινῶ τοῦτο· καὶ εἶπε δοθῆναι αὐτῇ φαγεῖν.

Kai evthèos anèstee to koràsion kai periepàti; een gar etòn dhòdheka. Kai exèsteesan ekstàsee megàlee. Kai dhiestèelato avtìs pollà ìna meedhèes gno tòuto; kai èepe dhothèenai avtèe phayìn.

And straightaway the girl got up and walked about; for she was about twelve years of age. And they were beside themselves with joy. And He instructed them carefully not to let this be known; and He said to them to give her something to eat.

Mark/Μαρκον 5.42,43

A reflection on Mark 5.42,43 ‘The effect of this astounding miracle of the raising of Jairus’ dead daughter is conveyed in the words of Mark, ‘they were really ecstatically ecstatic!’. Jesus, however, warns them about making this miracle the basis of faith in Him; then, in His compassion, seeing everyone in the midst of their excitement, He reminds them about the practical needs of this little girl who, after her ordeal, is hungry!’

כִּי-עֲוֹנִי אֶגִּיד אָדָאָג מְחַטְאֵתִי

Ki avonì aggìd; ed’àg mey-chatt’ati

For I will admit my failure; I am appalled at my own offence.

Psalm 38.18/תהילים לח"ט

A reflection on Psalm 38.18 ‘The Singer of this pain-filled lament is all too aware of his own brokenness. Tim Keller says, ‘The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.’ Daily lifted up from our fallenness, we are being embraced and transformed by God our Rescuer.’

February 22 2017 Day 53 Readings Leviticus 13:1-59, Mark 6:1-29, Psalm 39:1-13, Proverbs 10:10

נָגַע צָרַעַת כִּי תִהְיֶה בְּאָדָם וְהוּבָא אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן

Nèga tzara’at ki tihyèh be-adàm, ve-hubhà el ha-kohèn.

If any of you has an infectious skin disease, they will be brought to the priest.

Leviticus 13.9/ויקרא יג"ט

A reflection on Leviticus 13.9 ‘The regulations concerning the discernment of infectious disease, and, rightly or wrongly, of leprosy incur great shame on the sufferer. In a time before sanitation and modern medicine, quarantine was supposed to be the solution to keeping the community free from plague. However, the sufferers were abandoned to their terrible brokenness and forced to cry ‘Tameh, tameh!’ (Unclean, unclean!) whenever they came near others. No wonder, then, when Jesus brings love and hope to these people, it is such a revolution; He touches them, He brings them wholeness. In the age of Messiah, His people care for the sick as well as pray for their healing, leading to a culture of care for those with these conditions rather than their expulsion. It is from the heart of Jesus that the compassion and love for the sick and dying flows most obviously.’

καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνατο ἐκεῖ οὐδεμίαν δύναμιν ποιῆσαι, εἰ μὴ ὀλίγοις ἀρρώστοις ἐπιθεῖς τὰς χεῖρας ἐθεράπευσε· καὶ ἐθαύμαζε διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν. Καὶ περιῆγε τὰς κόμας κύκλω διδασκῶν. Kai ouk eedhýnato ekèe oudhemìan dhýnamin pi-èesai, ee mee olìgis aròstis epithèes tas chèeras etheràpevse; kai ethàvmaze dhià teen apistìan avtòn. Kai peri-èeye tas kòmas kýklo dhidhàskon.

And He was able to do hardly any miracles there, except to lay hands on a few sick people and heal them; and he was shocked at their absence of faith. So he travelled around the other villages teaching.

Mark 6.5,6/Μαρκου 6.5,6

A reflection on Mark 6.5,6 ‘The people of Nazareth are so familiar with Jesus that they miss what the Holy Spirit is doing through Him. It’s not that they have low-level faith; the Greek word is ‘apistia’ – a total absence of faith. In denigrating the person of Jesus, they have blocked the wonder of His presence touching their community. Jesus Himself is shocked at their hostility to Him, and takes His good news elsewhere.’

February 23 2017 Day 54 Readings Leviticus 14:1-57, Mark 6:30-56, Psalm 40:1-10, Proverbs 10:11-12

זאת תהיה תורת המצרע ביום טהרתו והובא אל-הכהן

Zot tihyèh toràt ha-metzorà be-yòm taharatò, ve-hubhà el-ha-kohèn.

And this will be the directive concerning the one with skin disease on the day of his cleansing, and he will be brought to the priest.

Leviticus 14.2/ויקרא יד"ב

A reflection on Leviticus 14.2 ‘After healing a leper early in His ministry (Mat.8.4, Mk 1.44, Lk. 5.14), Jesus directs the man to go to the priest and ‘offer those things instructed’. The ritual cleansing of a leper is outlined here in Leviticus 14, and involves several sacrifices and washings. In the process of the restoration of the recovered person to the community, a lamb is slain for their outstanding sin (Lev.14.12). With the death of the Lamb of God, Jesus, for the sins of the world, there is no need for any more such sacrifice, whether for cleansed lepers or sinful people. His blood has made us whole, once and for all.’

צדקתך לא-כסיתי בתוך לבי אמונתך ותשועתך אמרתי

לא-כחדתי חסדך ואמתך לקהל רב

Tzidqat-khà lo khissìti betòkh libbì; emunatkhà u-teshua’ atkhà amàrti, lo khichàdti chasdekhà va- amitkhà le-qahàl rabh.

I have not just covered up Your integrity in my heart, I have spoken out about Your dependability and Your rescue; I have not kept to myself about Your covenant-bonded grace and Your trustworthiness before the great assembly.

Psalm 40.10/תהלים מ"א

A reflection on Psalm 40.10. ‘In our age of ideological embarrassment about open talk of spiritual reality, it is too easy to keep the good things of God covered up like wrapped treasures in our hearts. But the Singer of Israel here refuses to hide God’s goodness and His ability to rescue, singing out loud of His integrity and dependability. Jesus tells us that what we receive in the secret place can be shouted from the rooftops, however politically incorrect it might seem!’

February 24 2017 Day 55 Readings Leviticus 15:1-16:28, Mark 7:1-23, Psalm 40:11-17, Proverbs 10:13-14

וְהַשְׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגּוֹרָל לְעֶזְאֵזֶל יַעֲמֵד-חַי לְפָנַי יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו--לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ
לְעֶזְאֵזֶל הַמִּדְבָּרָה

Ve-ha-sa’èer ashèr alàh alàyv ha-goràl la-azazèl ya’màd chai liphnèy Adonài, le-khappèr alàyv le-shallàch otò la-azazèl ha-midbàrah.

And the goat selected by lot as the scapegoat shall be set before the Lord, to appease Him by sending it as a scapegoat away into the desert.

Leviticus 16.10 ויקרא טז"א

A reflection on Leviticus 16.10 ‘The process of presenting sacrifice for sin on the Day of Covering (Yom Kippur) involved the priest offering a bullock for his own sin, then a goat for the sin of the nation. Having done this, another goat then had hands laid on it, to represent the sin of the people being carried into the desert (the ‘az-azel’, the scapegoat or ‘goat of leaving’.) It is placed before the Lord to ‘cover’ for Him, that is, to placate or appease. Although the English word ‘atonement’ is sometimes used here, that reads more into the Hebrew than is there; the blood of bulls and goats, and the driving of a lone animal into the wilderness were not able to unite God and man (to make them ‘at-one’), rather only made possible God’s continued presence among them, behind the separating veil. It is not until Jesus’ death at Golgotha that true at-one-ment takes place, as God breaks out through the torn curtain, and no more goats and bulls are needed.’

καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· καλῶς ἀθετεῖτε τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἵνα τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν τηρήσητε.
Kai èleyen avtis, ‘Kalòs athetèete teen endolèen tou Theòu ina teen paràdhosin ymòn teerèeseete.’

And He said to them, ‘You are so good at overlooking the instruction of God to maintain your own tradition.’

Mark 7.9/Μαρκον 7.9

A reflection on Mark 7.9 ‘Religion makes us feel more righteous, so we add things to God’s Word to make us look better. But Jesus shows the religious of His day that their traditions are negating God’s heart of love and turning His ways into oppression. We need to constantly re-evaluate our tradition to ensure it is not obscuring or nullifying God’s instructions.’

February 25 2017 Day 56 Readings Leviticus 16:29-18:30, Mark 7:24-8:10, Psalm 41:1-13, Proverbs 10:15-16

ἔφαγον δὲ καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἤραν περισσεύματα κλασμάτων ἑπτὰ σφυρίδας.

Èphagon dhe kai echortàstheesan, kai èeran perissèvmata klasmàton eptà spyrìdhas.

So they ate and were satisfied, and they picked up seven basketfuls of left-over crumbs!

Mark /Μαρκον 8.8

A reflection on Mark 8.8 ‘In case we should ever be tempted to doubt God’s generosity, here, after the miracle of the feeding of thousands with seven loaves, seven basketfuls of crumbs are gathered up. God gives in measure pressed down, shaken together and running over, so loving in His compassion.’

וְאֲנִי בְּתַמִּי תִמְכַּת בִּי וְתִצִּיבֵנִי לְפָנֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם

Va-anì be-toomì tamàkhta bee va-tatzibhèyni le-phanèykha le-olàm

As for me, You maintain me in my integrity and You place me before Your face constantly.

תהילים מא"ב/ Psalm 41.12

A reflection on Psalm 41.12 ‘The Singer of Israel is experiencing opposition even from his friends – verse 9 is the text John remembers Jesus speaking about His betrayal by Judas in John 13.18 – but the writer is not overcome by his antagonists, knowing that his integrity is maintained by the Lord, who keeps him in His sight, before His face day and night, in spite of the adverse conditions around him.’

February 26 2017 Day 57 Readings Leviticus 19:1-20:21, Mark 8:11-38, Psalm 42:1-11, Proverbs 10:17

וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת-קִצִּיר אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה פֶּאֶת שְׂדֵךְ לְקַצֹּר וְלִקְט קִצִּירָךְ לֹא תִלְקֹט
וְכִרְמֶךָ לֹא תַעֲוִיל וּפְרֹט כִּרְמֶךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט לְעֵנִי וְלִגֵּר תַעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
U-bhe-qutzrekhèm et-qetzìr artzekhèm, lo tekhallèh pe’at sadekhà liqtzòr, ve-leqet qetzirkhà
lo telaqèt. Ve-kharmekhà lo te’olèl u-phèret karmekhà lo telaqèt; le-anì ve-lagèr ta’azòbh
otàm. Anì Adonài Elohèykhèm.

And when harvesting the produce of your land, don’t cut right to the edges of your field to crop it, and don’t gather up the leftover parts of the harvest, and don’t strip out your vineyard either, nor get every last grape off the vine; leave them for the poor and the migrant. I am the LORD, your God.

ויקרא יט"ט א' / Leviticus 19v9,10

A reflection on Leviticus 19.9-10 ‘The directive of God here to leave the leftovers of the harvest for the poor and the migrant is a sign of His great compassion and love for all people. God is not interested in people amassing fortunes; He is interested in equity, in there being enough for all. This instruction is a life-saver to Ruth and Naomi in the book of Ruth, and leads to the love between Boaz and the Moabitess. In a day where we are so taken up with consumption, we need to remember this simple instruction of God, to leave something for those who have nothing.’

εἶτα πάλιν ἐπέθηκε τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν ἀναβλέψαι, καὶ ἀποκατεστάθη, καὶ ἐνέβλεψε τηλαυγῶς ἅπαντας.

Èeta pàlin epètheeke tas chèeras epì tous ophthalmòus avtòu kai epìeesen avtòn anabhlēpsai, kai apokatestàthee, kai enèbhlepse te lavgòs àpandas.

Then He (Jesus) put His hands on His eyes once more and then had him look up, and his sight was fully restored; he could see everything clearly.

Mark /Μαρκον 8.25

A reflection on Mark 8.25 ‘There is great encouragement for us here as we pray for the healing of those in need; Jesus took two goes at praying for this blind man to see, and on the second, his sight was fully restored. Jesus was not put off on the first occasion when the man said he could see only men ‘like walking trees’; He prayed again and saw the man totally healed. We should not be afraid to repeat our prayer, knowing that Jesus Himself pursued this man’s wholeness by praying again.’

February 27 2017 Day 58 Readings Leviticus 20:22-22:16, Mark 9:1-29, Psalm 43:1-5, Proverbs 10:18

καὶ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἐλίας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ, καὶ ἦσαν συλλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Kai òphthee avtìs Eelias syn Moysèe, kai èesan syllalòundas to Yeesòu.

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

Mark /Μαρκov 9.4

A reflection on Mark 9.4 ‘In this moment of the unveiling of the true nature of Jesus as the Son of God on the Mountain of Metamorphosis, His importance in the continuing story of God and His people is underlined, as the figures who sum up the Torah and the Prophets, Moses and Elijah, appear with Him and speak. Luke says they are talking of His ‘exodus’ – His departure, not so much into death, but into the glory of God, when He will ascend to them and take His rightful place at His Father’s right hand. There is so much anticipation about that coming glory, that heaven breaks in and these two venerable saints encourage Jesus for the road to Calvary that lies ahead.’

מה-תִּשְׁתַּחֲחִי, נַפְשִׁי וּמַה-תִּהְיֶה מִי עָלַי

הוֹחִילִי לֵאלֹהִים כִּי-עוֹד אוֹדְנֶנּוּ יִשׁוּעַת פָּנַי וְאֱלֹהֵי

Mah tishtochachì naphshì, u-mah tehemì alài? Hochìli l’Elohìm ki od odènnu, yeshu’òt panài v’Elohày.

Why are you so depressed, my soul, why such disquiet in me? Hold out for God, for I will give thanks to Him once again, the Rescuer of my identity and my God.

Psalm 43.5/ה"ה מג"ה

A reflection on Psalm 43.5. ‘This verse is an echo of the last of Psalm 42, an encouragement to hold out for God to come, literally, as the ‘rescuer of my face’ (yeshuòt panài). The face is that which immediately identifies us, by which we are differentiated from others. The Singer of Israel is looking to God to rescue his very person, his identity in the midst of a time when he feels as though he will be erased, rubbed out from the world. God’s power to save us, summed up in the one ultimate Rescuer, Yeshua, Jesus, reaches today to affirm our identity in Him, beloved sons and daughters.’

February 28 2017 Day 59 Readings Leviticus 22:17-23:44, Mark 9:30-10:12, Psalm 44:1-8, Proverbs 10:19

דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי

Dabbèr el-benèy Yisra’èl, ve-amartà alèyhem, ‘Mo’adèy Adonài ashèr tiqre’ù otàm miqra’èy qòdesh hem mo’adày.

Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘Here are the festivals of the Lord, which you will call as holy convocations; they are my festivals.’

Leviticus 23.2/ב"ב ויקרא כג"ב

A reflection on Leviticus 23.2 ‘The Lord sets out for Israel the major festivals of the year, beginning with the standing order of Sabbath rest (Shabbat) each seventh day. Then He designates Passover (Pesach), the Start of Harvest, (Reshit ha-Qatzir) Pentecost, or Weeks (Shabhu’ot) and in autumn, Trumpets, (Rosh ha-Shanah), the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and Tabernacles.(Sukkot). All these feasts have prophetic significance in the Messianic age to come. Jesus dies at Passover, rises at Start of Harvest, pours out the Spirit at Pentecost, and brings us Atonement. Yet the day of the last Trumpet and the final harvest when we become the Tabernacle of God Himself is still to reach its fulfilment when Jesus returns.’

καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰσὶ δύο, ἀλλὰ μία σὰρξ.
Kai èsondai i dhýo ees sàrka mìan. Òste oukèti eesì dhýo, allà mìa sarx.
And the two will share one flesh. So they are no longer two, but are united in one flesh.
Mark 10.8/Μαρκov 10.8

A reflection on Mark 10.8 ‘Jesus teaches His disciples on the transcendent mystery of true marriage, and why God is so protective of it. The melting into one flesh of the male and female in union with each other is the re-imagining of the unity of God within Himself. The awesome miracle of one flesh is seen in the being of every child, who is a unique blend of the physical nature of both mother and father. In this sign, imprinted into every person on earth, what was two has literally become one and cannot be separated. ’

כִּי לֹא בַחֲרָבָם יִרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ וְזָרְעָם לֹא-הוֹשִׁיעָהּ-לָמוֹ
כִּי-יִמְיִנְךָ וְזָרְעֶךָ וְאוֹר פְּנֶיךָ כִּי רָצִיתָם
Ki lo bhe-charbàm yorshù aretz, u-zero’àm lo hoshiah lamò, ki yeminkhà u-zero’akhà ve-òr panèkha ki retzitàm.
For they did not accede to the land by their own weapons, nor did their own effort rescue them; rather it was Your right hand, Your arm and the light of Your face, because You willed it so for them.
Psalm 44.3/תהילים מד"ג

A reflection on Psalm 44.3 ‘Without supernatural intervention, the people of Israel would never have been able to settle in the Promised Land. It is not their military strength which got them there, but the Lord’s intention to settle them in His territory, marked out to be the setting for His coming Messiah, Jesus, ‘in the fullness of time’.

בְּרֹב דְבָרִים לֹא יִחַדְּל-פִשַׁע וְחוֹשֶׁךְ שִׁפְתָיו מִשְׁכִּיל
Be-ròbh debharìm lo yechdàl pashà, ve-chosèkh sphotàyv maskìl.
There’s no end of harm in a lot of talking, while the intelligent zip their lips.
Proverbs 10.19/משלי י"ט

A reflection on Proverbs 10.19 ‘The Sage of the Proverbs sets a high value on holding one’s peace; ‘there’s no end of harm in a lot of talking, but the intelligent zip their lips’, he says. In an era where we are bombarded daily with voices from all directions, times of quiet and reflection are all the more necessary, to sift the gold of God from the sands of many words. In another place, the Book says, ‘When a fool is silent, he sounds like a wise man’!

March 1 2017 Day 60 Leviticus 24:1-25:46, Mark 10:13-31, Psalm 44:9-26, Proverbs 10:20-21

וְלִקְחֹתָ סֵלֶת וְאִפִּיתָ אֹתָהּ שְׁתֵּי עֶשְׂרֵה חֻלוֹת שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִים יְהִי הַחֹלֶה הָאֶחָד וְשִׁמְתָּ
אוֹתָם שְׁתֵּי מַעְרָכֹת שֵׁשׁ הַמַּעְרָכֹת עַל הַשֻּׁלְחָן הַטָּהוֹר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
Ve-laqàchta sòlet ve-aphità otàh shetèym esrèh challòt, shenèy esronìim yihyèh ha-chàllah ha-
echàt, ve-samtà otàm shetàyim ma-arakhòt shesh ha-ma-arakhèt al ha-shulchàn ha-tahòr
liphnèy Adonài.

And you will take flour and bake with it twelve *challah* loaves, weighing two-tenths of an ephah each *challah*, and place them in two rows, six in each row, on the consecrated table before the LORD.

Leviticus 24.5,6/ ויקרא כד"ה

A reflection on Leviticus 24.5,6 ‘In the holy place were to be twelve *challah* loaves. The *challah*, a sweet, braided loaf, is still made by Jews for Sabbath and other special days. It is also a common feature of many central and eastern European tables. In Exodus 25.30, the actual Hebrew term for this bread is ‘*bread of the presence-face*’ (Heb *léchem paním*) The word paním in Hebrew is the same word used for both presence *and* face, in that no one is considered to be present unless their face is evident. Thus the bread on the table in the Tent is seen as the sign of God being present to and with the people of Israel in His eternal covenant. For believers in Jesus Christ, this contributes a further layer of rich meaning to our celebration of Jesus’ death and resurrection in the bread and wine of the Eucharist-communion. For us, the bread of communion is our ‘*challah*’, our bread of His presence-face.’

ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὃς ἐὰν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς παιδίον, οὐ μὴ εἰσεέλθῃ πρὸς αὐτήν.

Amèn lègo ymìn, os eàn mee dhèxeetai teen bhasileìan tou Theou os paidhìon, ou mee eesèlthee pros avtèen.

I mean it when I say to you that if anyone doesn’t receive the reign of God like a child, they won’t gain access to it.

Mark 10.15/Μαρκov 10.15

A reflection on Mark 10.15 ‘The songwriter Godfrey Birtill sings, ‘Playing in the fields of grace, feeling the warmth of our Papa’s embrace...’ If the idea of playing and laughing before the throne of God causes us to protest in grown-up rationalistic ways, we are in danger of falling into the trap the disciples fell into when they wanted to keep the children from Jesus. Our heavenly Father is awesome, but He is warm and embracing, holding us close, singing over us. If we won’t come as children to Daddy, Jesus says, we cannot access the good things of His kingly rule.’

March 2 2017 Day 61 Readings Leviticus 25:47-27:13, Mark 10:32-52, Psalm 45:1-17, Proverbs 10:22

וּפְנִיתִי אֲלֵיכֶם וְהִפְרֵיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִקִּימֹתִי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶכְלֹתֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל
נוֹשֵׂן וְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי חֹדֶשׁ תּוֹצִיאוּ
u-phaniti alèykhèm ve-hiphrèyti etkhèm ve-hirbèyti etkhèm ve-haqimotì et-beritì itkhèm ve-
akhaltèm yashàn noshàn ve-yashàn mipnèy chadàsh totzi’ù.

And I will turn my face towards you and make you fruitful and multiply you and establish my covenant with you, and you will still be eating the old grain when you have to move it out to store the new grain.

Leviticus 26v9&10/ ויקרא כו"ט י

A reflection on Leviticus 26.9 and 10 ‘When God turns His face towards us, in covenant faithfulness and love, fruitfulness ensues. Why we would want to look anywhere else for our supply and sustenance than to Him? His promise is not that we will lack, but that we will have sufficiency, and more than sufficient, to bless others. This is why in Jesus’ prayer, we are taught to pray ‘give us today more than enough bread’ (ton arton ymon to epiousion dos ymas seemeron) , not to hoard, but to share with those in need.’

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθε διακονηθῆναι, ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι, καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

Kai gar o Yiòs tou anthròpou ouk èlthe dhiakoneethèenai, allà dhiakonèesai, kai dhòunai teen psychèen avtòu lýtron andì pollòn.

For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve and to give His being as a ransom for many.

Mark /Μαρκον 10.45

A reflection on Mark 10.45 ‘Jesus has been responding to His apprentice-followers’ bids to get the power-positions beside Him. But Jesus makes it clear that in His order of things, power has no pull; what matters is how self-giving the leader is, not how self-important. In a world where we still push and jostle for position, it is worth refreshing our memories about these words of Jesus; the low place is the place of freedom, the place of Jesus Himself, wrapped in a towel, washing the feet of His creatures. Because of His selflessness, we have been reconciled, released from the grip of the evil one, and made heirs of heaven. His is the model of true leadership.’

March 3 2017 Day 62 Readings Leviticus 27:14-Numbers 1:54, Mark 11:1-26, Psalm 46:1-11, Proverbs 10:23

שְׂאוּ אֶת-רֹאשׁ כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְבֵית אֲבוֹתָם--בְּמִסְפָּר שְׂמוֹת כָּל-זָכָר
לְגִלְגֹּתָם

Se’ù et-ròsh kol adàt Yisra’èl le-mishpechotàm, le-bhèyt abhotàm, be-mispàr shemòt kol zakhàr le-gulgelotàm.

Take a census of the whole assembly of Israel by their families, according to their ancestors, recording a named head-count of every male.

Numbers 1.2/במדבר א"ב

A reflection on Numbers 1.2 ‘The Lord calls for a census of every male in Israel; only He may call for the numbering of the people, since other counts are prohibited. (David later undertakes one not so called-for, which angers the Lord.) While there are lists of names and numbers in the chapters which follow, they are each one an actual, beloved part of God’s people, important to Him, and seen as noted by Him in those days of adventure with God in this book the Hebrew reader calls ‘ba-midbar’- ‘in the wilderness.’

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ מִשְׁגֵּב-לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה

Adonài tzebha’òt immànu, misgàbh lànù, Elohèy Ya’aqobh; sèlah.

The Lord of Hosts is with us, a refuge for us, the God of Jacob; (pause and reflect .)

Psalm 46.11/תהילים מו"ב

A reflection on Psalm 46.11, ‘In the midst of turmoil, Israel’s Singer of songs declares that the Lord, Earth-maker, is with them. He uses the word ‘immanu’ – with us, which, adding the short form for God, ‘El’ sums up the person of Jesus’ Immanu-El, the very present embodiment of God come as one of us to rescue us from our brokenness.’

March 4 2017 Day 63 Readings Numbers 2:1-3:51, Mark 11:27-12:17, Psalm 47:1-9, Proverbs 10:24-25

אִישׁ עַל-דִּגְלוֹ בְּאֵתֶת לְבַיִת אָבֹתָם יִחַנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִנְּגֵד סְבִיב לְאֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד יִחַנוּ
Ish al-diglò ve-otòt le-bhèyt abhotàm yachanù benèy Yisra'èl; mi-nèged sabhibh le-òhel mo'èd yachanù.

Each of the sons of Israel will camp according to the position of the flag and banner of the house of his fathers; in sight of and surrounding the tent of meeting they will make camp.

Numbers 2.2/ במדבר ב"ב

A reflection on Numbers 2.2 'The camp of Israel was arranged in such a way that each tribe was within sight of God's own tent, the tabernacle. Everything they did in the camp was relative to the presence of the Lord in their midst; He was literally the centre and focus of their lives. The call upon us is to order our lives in such a way that we can touch His presence from wherever we are found.'

καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς; ἢ τίς σοι τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἔδωκεν, ἵνα ταῦτα ποιῆς;

Kai lègousin avtò, 'En pia exousia tàvta pièes? Ee tis si teen exousian tàvteen èdhoken, ina tàvta pièes?'

And they said to Him, 'By what authority do you do these things? And who gave You this authority, to do these things?'

Mark /Μαρκον 11.28

A reflection on Mark 11.28 'Authority is always a great question in the world's eyes. The religious authorities see themselves as the guardians, as the authorised ones because of their traditions. But Jesus' authority is His Father's seal upon Him, witnessed by the signs and wonders of the Kingdom. The Greek word for authority has to do with the essence, the identity of someone. Jesus' identity derives from His Father, as well as from the story His Father is unfolding through Him. With this quiet assurance, Jesus can face the questions of the technocrats around Him.'

March 5 2017 Day 64 Numbers 4:1-5:31, Mark 12:18-37, Psalm 48:1-14, Proverbs 10:26

וּבָא אַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו בְּנֹסַע הַמַּחֲנֶה וְהוֹרְדוּ אֶת פְּרֻכַת הַמִּסָּךְ וְכִסּוּ-בָהּ--אֶת אָרֶן הָעֵדוּת
U-bhà Aharòn u-bhanàyv binsò-a ha-machanèh, ve-hordù et paròkhet ha-masàkh, ve-khissù bha et aròn ha-edùt.

And Aaron and his sons will come at the striking of the camp, and will take down the covering veil, and will cover with it the ark of witness.

Numbers 4.5/ במדבר ד"ה

A reflection on Numbers 4.5 'Even in the moving on of the ark from place to place in the desert, it was to be covered in the great veil of separation so that no one looked on its awesome beauty in error. What a privilege is ours, then, to enter by the new and living way made by Jesus' blood into the very presence of God without fear; there is no more veil between us!'

οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Θεὸς νεκρῶν, ἀλλὰ ζώντων· ὑμεῖς οὖν πολὺ πλανᾶσθε.

Ouk èstin o Theòs nekròn, allà zòndon; ymèes oun polý planàsthe.

He is not God of the dead, but of the living; so you are being greatly deceived.

Mark 12.27/Μαρκον 12.27

πάντες γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύοντος αὐτοῖς ἔβαλον· αὕτη δὲ ἐκ τῆς ὑστερήσεως αὐτῆς πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν ἔβαλεν, ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς.

Pàndes gar ek tou perissèvondos avtìs èbhalon; avtèe de ek tees ysterèeseos avtèes pànda òsa èechen èbhalen, òlon ton bhìon avtèes.

For all of them donated from their wealth; but she even out of her poverty gave everything she had, all her livelihood.

Mark /Μαρκov 12.44

A reflection on Mark 12.44 ‘The well-known poor widow does not compare herself with the rich who are giving from their surplus. She just has such a heart to bless and to honour God that she gives extravagantly all her pennies, and God notices, to the extent of her being remembered for her love.’

March 7 2017 Day 66 Numbers 8:1-9:23, Mark 13:14-37, Psalm 50:1-23, Proverbs 10:29-30

וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֶת-הַלְוִיִּם לְפָנַי אֵלֶּיךָ מוֹעֵד וְהִקְהַלְתָּ--אֶת-כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Ve-hiqrabhtà et-ha-Levi'im liphnèy ohèl mo'èd ve-hiqhaltà et-kol-adàt benèy Yisra'èl
And you will bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and call all the Sons of Israel together.

Numbers 8.9/ח"ט במדבר

A reflection on Numbers 8.9 ‘The tribe of Levi was representative of Israel in the service of the Lord in the tent of meeting, but they did not replace Israel in their calling as a people to be God’s voice and hands into the world. And so with us, where some are designated and released to give their time fully to explore the things of God, it is only so that the whole of Christ’s body may be equipped to be priests for Him to the world in every sphere of its life.’

Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἢ τῆς ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐν οὐρανῷ, οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ.

Perì dhe tees eemèras ekìnees ee tees òras oudhèes ìdhen, oudhè i àngeli en ouranò, oudhè o Yìòs, ee mee o patèer.

For no one knows when that day and that hour will be, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son; only the Father.

Mark /Μαρκov 13.35

A reflection on Mark 13.35 ‘Jesus is very specific about the end of time, when the Son of God returns in His glory in the skies, and all eyes see Him; He says that no one, not even He Himself knows when it will be. His Father alone will designate the moment when the Son returns for His Bride and to banish evil and decay from the cosmos. Jesus the Son is content to leave this matter reserved to Him, and we should leave off speculating and do the same, only being ready and expectant for Jesus’ coming again.’

March 8 2017 Day 67 Reading Numbers 10:1-11:23, Mark 14:1-21, Psalm 51:1-19, Proverbs 10:31-32

וַיְהִי בְּנִסְעֵה אֶרְוֹן וַיֹּמַר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה יְהוָה וְיִפְצוּ אֹיְבֹיךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנֵאֲפִיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ

Va-yehì bi-nesà ha-aròn va-yomèr Moshèh, ‘Qùmah, Adonài ve-yaphùtsu oyebhèkha, ve-yanùsu mesanèkha mi-panèkha’

And so it was, at the picking up of the ark that Moses said, ‘Arise, LORD, and let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee from Your face.’

Numbers 10.35/לה"י במדבר

A reflection on Numbers 10.35 ‘The call of Moses at the taking up of the ark of the covenant is a stirring appeal to God to travel with them, and for those who would oppose them to retreat, not from the people and their power, but from the glory of God’s face and presence. Indeed, in Joshua 2.11, it is the fear of the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, which puts Rahab in awe in Jericho. The power of the Lord among His people causes consternation to a world who has ruled Him out of their reckoning. (Acts 5.13) We need not apologise for Him, however.

Καὶ ὄντος αὐτοῦ ἐν Βηθανία ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ Σίμωνος τοῦ λεπροῦ, κατακειμένου αὐτοῦ ἦλθε γυνὴ ἔχουσα ἀλάβαστρον μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς καὶ συντρίψασα τὸ ἀλάβαστρον κατέχευεν αὐτοῦ κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς.

Kai òndos avtòu en Bheethania en tee eekia Simonos tou lepròu, katakimènou avtòu èelthe yeenèe èchousa alàbhastron mýrou nàrdou pistikèes polytelòus kai syntripsasa to alàbhastron katèche-en avtòu katà tees kephalèes.

And when He was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper, relaxing at table, a woman came with an alabaster container of ointment made from finest nard, extremely expensive, and she cracked open the alabaster and poured it down over His head.

Mark /Μαρκov 14.3

A reflection on Mark 14.3 ‘A woman comes while Jesus is at supper in Bethany and shatters an alabaster container, releasing pure nard ointment down onto His head. Nard, or spikenard, is an exotic perfume made from the root of a plant (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), growing in the Himalayas in northern India and Nepal. No wonder it was so valuable! Although it is not mentioned in the Torah, the Rabbis taught in the Talmud that it was also added to the incense burned on the altar in the Temple, in the days of Jesus. This is perhaps why Jesus links the spice with His coming death, since incense, including nard, would have been added to sacrifices in the Temple. Her breaking of this irreparable box, with the extravagance of her offering, insenses the bystanders as waste; but as Jesus promised her, we still remember her costly worship of the Lamb of God who was about to take away the sin of the world.’

March 9 2017 Day 68 Readings Numbers 11:24-13:33, Mark 14:22-52, Psalm 52:1-9, Proverbs 11:1-3

וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Ve-ha-ish Moshèh anàv me’òd mi-kòl ha-adàm ashèr al-penèy ha-adamàh

And the man Moses was very self-effacing, more than any man on the face of the earth

Numbers 12v3/ג"ב במדבר

A reflection on Numbers 12.3 ‘Moses is a man who, through hard experience, realises that without the Lord’s power he can do nothing. Once we look into the face of God, we recognise that our own fragile existence is nothing to crow about, while His fathomless grace and power is all there really is to sing about.’

Καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον εὐλογήσας ἔκλασε καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπε· λάβετε φάγετε· τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου. καὶ λαβὼν τὸ ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ αἷμά μου τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον.

Kai esthiòndon avtòn, labhòn o Yeèsous àrton evloyèesas èklase kai èdhoken avtìs kai èepe, 'Làbhete phàyete; toutò-esti to sòma mou.' Kai labhòn to potèerion, evcharistèesas èdhoken avtìs. Kai èpion ex avtòu pàndes kai èepen avtìs, 'Tòutò-esti to àimà-mou to tees kainèes dhiathèekees to peri pollòn enchynnòmenon.'

And while they were eating, taking bread Jesus blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And having taken and given thanks for the cup, He gave it to them. And all of them drank from it as He said to them, 'This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for many.'

Mark /Μαρκov 14.22-24

A reflection on Mark 14.22-24 'Whatever doctrine we hold to about the bread and wine the Lord gave to His disciples at the Passover on the eve of His death, we all believe that they are a sign, indeed, an edible and drinkable recording, enfolding us into the very cross and resurrection of Jesus. Furthermore, He makes clear this is a covenant sign, marking the release of the promised New Covenant which broadens and deepens the embrace of God to include all of us who trust Him through Messiah, grafting us into His own people . These, then, are the promissory notes, the currency of heaven; by these we eat and drink into ourselves the very act of God's redemption.'

March 10 2017 Day 69 Readings Numbers 14:1-15:16, Mark 14:53-72, Psalm 53:1-6, Proverbs 11:4

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה סְלַחְתִּי כְדַבְרְךָ וְאוֹלָם חַי-אֲנִי וַיִּמְלֵא כְבוֹד-יְהוָה אֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ

Va-yòmer Adonài, 'Salàchti kidbharèkha; ve-ulàm chai anì ve-malè khebhòd Adonài et kol ha-àretz.

And the LORD said, 'I have granted forgiveness as you have asked; but as surely as I live, the whole land will be filled with the glory of the LORD.'

Numbers 14.20/כ"ד במדבר

A reflection on Numbers 14.20 'The people of Israel have just refused their inheritance, doubting the Lord's promise to bring them into the land of Canaan because of the strength of the inhabitants. As a result, God is about to wipe them out and restart the story with just Moses and Aaron; the two brothers plead with God, and ask for pardon for the stiff-necked people. The Lord relents, but refuses to allow any of the unbelievers, all those over twenty years of age, to ever enter the promised land. He forgives, but restates His intention to see this land filled with His visible presence, with His gravity, with His glory, however long it takes. God is not dependent on anyone to fulfil His purposes; if one generation says no to His call, He will wait until one arises whose heart accords with His.'

ὁ δὲ ἐσιώπα καὶ οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο. πάλιν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐπηρώτα αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ἐγὼ εἰμι· καὶ ὄψεσθε τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

O dhe esiōpa kai oudhèn apekrinato. Pàlin o archierèfs epeeròta avtòn kai lèyee avtò, ‘Sy ee o Christòs o Yiòs tou evloyeetòu?’ O dhe Ieesòus èpen, ‘Egò-eeme’; kai òpsesthe ton Yiòn tou anthròpou ek dhexiòn kathèemenon tees dhynàmeos kai erchòmenon metà ton nephelòn tou ouranòu.

But He (Jesus) stayed silent and said nothing in response. Again the chief priest questioned Him and said to Him, ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?’ Then Jesus said, ‘I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds in the sky.’

Mark 14.61,62/Μαρκov 14.61,62

A reflection on Mark 14.61,62. ‘This kangaroo court of the High Priest is illegal on many counts; the Jewish Talmud forbids proceedings or arraignment at night, yet so determined are the Sanhedrin to get Jesus out of the way that they ignore due process. Even then, they cannot get two witnesses to agree. Finally, the High Priest asks Jesus directly if He is Messiah, and gets a straight answer after all the lies of others. ‘Yes’ He says, ‘I am’. (Jewish law also forbids questions ensnaring an accused by His own statement.) Jesus towers in His integrity above the grubby politicking of His accusers; He unmasks the fickleness of human power, and reveals the utter transcendence of His Father’s.’

March 11 2017 Day 70 Readings Numbers 15:17-16:40, Mark 15:1-47, Psalm 54:1-7, Proverbs 11:5-6

וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל-מֹשֶׁה וְעַל-אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב-לָכֶם--כִּי כָל-הָעֵדָה כָּלָם קְדוֹשִׁים וּבְתוֹכָם יְהוָה וּמִדּוֹעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל-קֹהֵל יְהוָה

Va-yiqqahalù al-Moshèh ve-al Aharòn va-yomrù alèyhem, ‘Rabh lakhèm ki khol ha-edàh kulàm qedoshìm u-bhetokhàm Adonài u-madua titnass`ù al-qehàl Adonài.

And they (250 celebrities led by Korah), gathered together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, ‘You make too much of yourselves, seeing that the whole congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; so why are you lording it so much over the Lord’s assembly?’

Numbers 16.3/ג"ל במדבר טז

A reflection on Numbers 16.3 ‘There is nothing so unsightly as power-politics among the people of the Lord. Here, Korah and two hundred and fifty celebrities of Israel accuse Moses and Aaron of lording it over the people, who they say are just as special, being also called of the Lord. In a terrible vindication of His servants, the Lord removes Korah and his cohort, establishing His favour on the leaders of His choosing. It is a salutary reminder in the story of God’s people that man’s methods of doing things by dictate of popular opinion is not His way, who anoints based on faithfulness to His heart rather than to please man.’

Καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπὸ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω.

Kai to katarètasma tou naòu eschìsthee ees dhýo apò ànothen èos kàto.

And the curtain of the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom.

Mark 15.38/Μαρκov 15.38

A reflection on Mark 15.38; ‘When a covenant sacrifice was made, as with Abraham’s in Genesis 15, the animal’s carcass was split down the backbone into two pieces. Here, it is not the body of the Lamb of God, Jesus which is torn apart, but the great veil in the Temple, separating the glory of God from sinful man. In the death of Messiah, God brings us all into the eternal covenant-bonded grace of ‘hesed’ with Himself. This is possibly why the writer to the Hebrews says that the new and living way made for us to the very face of God runs ‘through the veil, which is His flesh.’ (Heb.10.20)

March 12 2017 Day 71 Reading Numbers 16:41-18:32, Mark 16:1-20, Psalm 55:1-23, Proverbs 11:7

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן בְּאַרְצָם לֹא תִנָּחַל וְחֶלֶק לֹא-יְהִיֶּה לָּךְ בְּתוֹכָם אֲנִי חֶלְקֶךָ וְנִחַלְתָּךְ
בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Va-yomèr Adonài el-Aharòn, ‘be-artzàm lo-tinachàl ve-hèyleq lo-yihyèh lekhà be-tokhàm; anì chelqekhà ve-nachalatkhà be-tòkh benèy Yisraèl.’

And the LORD said to Aaron, ‘You will have no legacy in their land and there will be no allocation for you among them; I the LORD am Your allocation and Your legacy among the sons of Israel

Numbers 18v20/כ"ח במדבר יח

A reflection on numbers 18.20 ‘While the other tribes of Israel had allocations of land to work and keep, the tribe of Levi was called to find their whole sufficiency in the Lord. The other tribes would support them materially, but they were not to become attached to specific property as the rest were. The Psalmist speaks often about God being his portion and inheritance – only the Lord brings true security for our lives.’

ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς· μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἠγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν.

O dhe lèyee avtàis, ‘Mee ekthambhèesthe; Yeesòun zeetèete ton Nazareenòn ton estavromènon – eeyèrthee, ouk èstin òdhe. Ídhe o tòpos òπου ètheekan avtòn.’

Then he (the angel) said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified – He has risen, He is not here! Look, here’s the place where He was laid.’

Mark/Μαρκov 16.6

A reflection on Mark 16.6 ‘The account of the rising of Jesus from the dead is outrageous! It is also full of human reality, displayed in the terror and disbelief of those who should have been expecting it most. This is not the story of a heroic, triumphant set of believers who welcomed with joy their Master back from the dead, but rather of a dazed, incredulous bunch who needed to be convinced of it against their rational judgement; indeed, the earliest scrolls of Mark end at verse 8, with the women so traumatised by their experience at the empty grave, they don’t tell anyone! Yet Mark’s Gospel, whether completed later by Mark or another hand, adds the final picture of Jesus, alive, ascended, seated at the right hand of the Father and a band of apostles boldly declaring the news of Jesus, the crucified, alive, confirmed by healings, deliverance and resurrection which silences the nay-sayers and opens the gates of heaven to all ever after.’

March 13 2017 Day 72 Readings Numbers 19:1-20:29, Luke 1:1-25, Psalm 56:1-13, Proverbs 11:8

וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן מִפְּנֵי הַקָּהָל אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד-יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם

Va-yavò Moshè ve-Aharòn mipnèy ha-qahàl el-pètach ohèl mo'èd va-yiplù al-penèyhem, va-yerà khevòd Adonài alèyhem

And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the people to the entrance of the meeting-tent and they fell on their faces, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them

Numbers 20v6/1" במדבר כ

A reflection on Number 20.6 ‘When Moses and Aaron present themselves before the Lord at the tent of meeting, the glory of God appears to them, visibly. The word ‘glory’ in Hebrew is connected with weight, import. In the same way that the gravity of the moon’s weight sets the earth’s marine tides, so God’s glory, His gravity, revealed to man, has a powerful effect on our lives. Here, God’s presence becomes visibly manifest to the ancient brothers. With the revealing of the New Covenant, that gravity of God becomes visible in the life, death and resurrection of one man, Jesus Christ, changing forever the tide of man’s affairs.’

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐγὼ εἰμι Γαβριήλ ὁ παρεστηκὸς ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἀπεστάλην λαλῆσαι πρὸς σε καὶ εὐαγγελίσασθαί σοι ταῦτα·
Kai apokrithèes o àngelos èpen avtò, ‘Egò-eemi Gabhri-èel o paresteekòs enòpion tou Theòu, kai apestàleen lalèesai pros se kai evangelisasthai si tàvta.’

And the angel replied and said to him (Zacharias), ‘I am Gabriel, the one who stands before God, and He has commissioned me to speak to you and to bring the good news of these things to you.’

Luke /Λουκᾶν 1.19

A reflection on Luke 1.19 ‘Zacharias and Elizabeth his wife bridge the chasm between the pre-Messianic era and the coming of Jesus; they are of the descendants of Aaron, the Priestly tribe, and this service finds Zacharias in the Temple in the roster of priests assigned by King David, way back in history. Gabriel (Mighty Man of God), the angel of the Lord appears to him here, to announce the good news (the word he uses in Greek is evangelisasthai) of a son in their childlessness, just as to Sarah, Rebekah and Hannah before them. Gabriel is ‘apostled’ from heaven, sent out from the face of God with this announcement, as the silence of centuries is broken with the coming of John, who will pave the way for Messiah Himself.’

March 14 2017 Day 73 Readings Numbers 21:1-22:20, Luke 1:26-56, Psalm 57:1-11, Proverbs 11:9-11

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-בְּלָעָם לֹא תִלְךָ עִמָּהֶם לֹא תֵאָר אֶת-הָעָם כִּי בְרוּךְ הוּא
Va-yomèr Elohim el-Bil’àm ‘lo tèleykh immahèm, lo ta’òr et-ha-àm ki barùkh hu.’

And God said to Bala’am ‘Don’t go with them, (Balak’s men). Don’t curse those people (Israel), because they are blessed.’

Numbers 22v12/ב"י במדבר כב

A reflection on Numbers 22.12 ‘It is impossible for a curse to land upon the people who are blessed by the Lord. Bala’am the Mesopotamian prophet is told by the Lord not to even trouble attempting it (a word which he subsequently ignores, resulting in two of the most humorous stories in the Scriptures – Bala’am’s talking donkey and the failed attempts at cursing Israel.) Today, God’s blessing is upon those in Christ; we need fear no evil.’

ὅτι ἐποίησέ μοι μεγαλεία ὁ δυνατός καὶ ἅγιον τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν τοῖς φοβουμένοις αὐτόν.
Òti epìeese mi megalèia o dhynatòs kai àyion to ònoma avtòu, kai to èleos avtòu ees yeneàs yeneòn tis phobhoumènìs avtòn.

כי גדולות עשה לי שדי וקדוש שמו וחסדו לדור דורים על יראיו
Ki gedolòt asàh li Shaddài, ve-qaddòsh shemò, ve-chasdò le-dòr dorìm al yereyàyv.
For the Most High has done great things for me, and holy is His Name; His covenant grace goes on from generation to generation to those in awe of Him.
Luke /Λουκᾶν 1.49

A reflection on Luke 1.49 ‘Mary’s words of exultation at the house of Elizabeth are like something straight of out the Hebrew Psalms. She exalts the Most High, whose name is holy, and celebrates His ‘chesed’, His covenant bonded-grace which goes on forever to those in awe of Him – using words echoing the anthem of Israel through millennia – ‘the Lord is good, and His covenant-grace lasts forever.’ We lose this Jewish context of the coming of Jesus at our peril; it is us who are folded and grafted into their salvation story, not they into ours.’

March 15 2017 Day 74 Readings Numbers 22:21-23:30, Luke 1:57-80, Psalm 58:1-11, Proverbs 11:12-13

לֹא אִישׁ אֶל וַיִּכְזַב וּבֶן-אָדָם וַיִּתְנַחֵם הֲוֵא אָמַר וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה וְדַבָּר וְלֹא יְקִימֶנָה הִנֵּה בִרְךָ לְקַחְתִּי וּבִרְךָ וְלֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנָה

Lo ish El vi-khazèbh, u-bhèn adàm ve-yitnechàm. Ha-hù amàr ve-lò ya’asèh, ve-dibbèr ve-lò yeqimènnah? Hinèh, bharèykh laqàchti, u-bheyrèykh ve-lò ashibhènnah.

(The prophet Balaam speaks to King Balak of Moab)

‘God is no human, likely to lie, nor a human child, likely to go back on what He said. Has He ever said something He doesn’t do, or spoken and not acted on it? Look, I was instructed to bless, so I blessed and I can’t take it back!’

Numbers 23v19,20/כ"ט כ"ג

A reflection on Numbers 23.19-20 ‘In one of the most comic episodes of all Scripture, King Balak of Moab, faced with Israel camped on his borders, hires a non-Jewish prophet of the Lord named Balaam to curse them. Despite refusing to come at first, then being almost killed by an angel, saved only by the reaction of his donkey, Balaam tries to fulfil his mission. However, he cannot curse what God is blessing and each time his words are full of the Lord’s favour to His people. As followers of Israel’s Messiah, and folded into His covenant family through faith in Him, we can take hold today of this amazing fact, that God has blessed His people and therefore no curse can land on those, whom God has favoured!’

ποιῆσαι ἔλεος μετὰ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν καὶ μνησθῆναι διαθήκης ἀγίας αὐτοῦ, ὄρκον ὀνῶμοσε πρὸς Ἀβραὰμ τὸν πατέρα ἡμῶν, τοῦ δοῦναι ἡμῖν

Pièesai èleos metà ton patèron eemòn kai mneesthènai dhiathèkees ayias avtòu, òrkon on òmose pros Abhra’àm ton patèra eemòn, tou dòunai eemin. (Greek New Testament)

לַעֲשׂוֹת חֶסֶד עִם־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלִזְכֹּר אֶת־בְּרִית קְדֹשׁ:אֶת־הַשְּׁבוּעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ:

La’assòt chèsed im-abhotèynu, ve-lizkòr et-berìt qodshò, et-ha-shebhu’ah ashèr nishbà le-Abhrahàm. (Hebrew New Testament)

To enact covenant-bonded grace to our fathers, and to recall the covenant of His holiness, the vow He vowed to Abraham.

Luke 1.72,73/Λουκᾶν 1.72,73/פ"ג א"פ

A reflection on Luke 1.72,73 ‘Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, would, as a priest of the house of Levi no doubt have prophesied in Aramaic or Hebrew. His tongue released from being dumb, he pours out ancient praise and prophetic thanks to the Lord at the circumcision of his miracle-son, John. At this point, in particular, he proclaims the awesome fulfilment coming in their days of the covenant made to Abraham, to which the Lord is held by the principle of ‘hesed’, bonded grace, not merely mercy. Luke manifestly understands the events he is describing as in continuity with what has gone before, not in opposition to them.’

Τὸ δὲ παιδίον ἠϋξανε καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο πνεύματι, καὶ ἦν ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις ἕως ἡμέρας ἀναδειξέως αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν Ἰσραήλ.

To dhe paidhìon ee-ýxane kai ekraatiòuto pnèvmati, kai een en tais erèemis è-os eemèras anadhìxeos avtòu pros ton Isra-èel.

So the child (John the Baptist) grew and was empowered by the Spirit, and lived in the wild places until the days of his presentation to Israel.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 1.80

A reflection on Luke 1 .80 ‘Zechariah prophesies over his baby son the place he will take as the Elijah-forerunner of the Most High, heralding forgiveness and the rising of the light which Isaiah has presaged in the ninth chapter of his words. As John grows, he becomes a lover of the desert places, and grows in the power of the Spirit until he speaks out publicly.’

March 16 2017 Day 75 Readings Numbers 24:1-25:18, Luke 2:1-35, Psalm 59:1-17, Proverbs 11:14

וַיֵּרָא בְלָעָם כִּי טוֹב בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה לְבָרְךָ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא-הֲלַךְ כְּפַעַם-בְּפַעַם לְקִרְאֵת נְחָשִׁים
וַיֵּשֶׁת אֶל-הַמִּדְבָּר פָּנָיו וַיִּשָּׂא בְלָעָם אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל שֹׁכֵן לְשִׁבְטָיו וַתְּהִי עָלָיו רוּחַ
אֱלֹהִים

Va-yàr Bil’àm ki tobh be-eynèy Adonài le-bharèykh et-Yisra’èl ve-lo halàkh ke-pha’àm be-pa’àm liqràt nechashìm, va-yashèt el-ha-midbàr panàyv va-yisà Bhil’àm et-eynày va-yàr et-Yisra’èl shokhèn lishbhatàyv, va-tehì alàyv Rùach Elohìm.

So when Balaam realised that the Lord only intended good to Israel by blessing them, instead of resorting to spells as at other times, he turned his face towards the desert, and fixed his gaze on where Israel was dwelling, arranged by tribe, and the Spirit of God was upon him.

Numbers 24.1,2/במדבר כד"א ב

A reflection on Numbers 24.1,2 ‘The upshot of the farcical attempts of Balak to get Balaam the prophet of the Lord to curse Israel is that Balaam finally gives up trying to cast spells over God’s people and instead blesses them with God’s blessing. He rounds it off by prophesying the downfall of Balak and Moab, and returns north in dishonour. What is amazing to see here is that this non-Jewish prophet (as far as we can make out), when he aligns with God’s heart for His people, is anointed by the Spirit of God to speak their blessing. When we line up with God’s intention, we too will encounter the anointing of His Spirit to bless what He is blessing.’

νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλόν σου, δέσποτα, κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ· ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου.

Nyn apolyís ton dhoulòn sou, dhèspota, katà to rhèmà-sou en eerèenee; òti èedhon i ophthalmì mou to sotèerìdn-sou. (Greek NT)

נתת תפטר את עבדך כדברך אדני בשלום: כִּי־רָאוּ עֵינַי אֶת־יְשׁוּעָתְךָ:

Attà tiphtàr et-abhdèkha kidbharèkha Adonài be-shalòm, ki ra'ù eynàv et-Yeshuatèkha. (Hebrew NT)

Now let your servant go in peace, Lord, for my eyes have seen Your rescue (/Your Jesus.)

Luke 2.29,30/Λουκᾶν 2.29,30/לוקס ב"כט ל

A reflection on Luke 2.29,30 ‘Just as John’s father, Zacharias the Levite prophesied in Hebrew or Aramaic, so Simeon in the Temple would have done the same. There is a prophetic insight in his words which are missed in translation, even into Luke’s Greek – he thanks God for allowing him to see the Lord’s rescue, His ‘Yeshua’, which is of course the name Mary and Joseph are presenting him at the Temple to confirm. Simeon is holding in his own arms the baby whose very name designates Him as the deliverer of mankind.’

March 17 2017 Day 76 Reading Numbers 26:1-51, Luke 2:36-52. Psalm 60:1-12, Proverbs 11:15

καὶ εἶπε πρὸς αὐτοῦς· τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με; οὐκ ἤδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου δεῖ εἶναί με;

Kai èepe pros avtòus, ‘Ti òti ezeetèetè-mé? Ouk èedheete òti en tis tou patròs mou dhee èenài-mé?’

(Jesus speaks to Mary and Joseph, who have lost him during His first Passover, aged 12) And He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you realise I have to be into my Father’s stuff?’

Luke/Λουκᾶν 2.49

A reflection on Luke 2.49 ‘There is a gentle rebuff to Mary in this encounter with her twelve-year-old son in the Temple after three days of looking for Him after Passover. Mary tells Jesus how worried she and His ‘father’ have been, looking for Him high and low. But Jesus is not lost to His Father at all; He is fully engaged with Him, even while His foster-father Joseph has been searching. Luke tells us they didn’t understand His words; perhaps we should read here that they didn’t grasp the import of what He was saying. Jesus, even as He enters manhood, is fully aware of who His One, true Abba is.’

נתתה ליראיך נס להתנוסס מפני קשט סלה

Natàtta lirey’èkha nes le-hitnosès mìpney qòshet. Sèlah.

You have given to those who hold You in awe a standard to be displayed in the face of attack. (Pause for music.)

Psalm 60.4/תהילים ס"ד/1

A reflection on Psalm 60.4 ‘In the midst of a cry to God for help when opposition seems overwhelming, the Singer remembers that God has established a relationship with His people which sustains them in adversity, giving them a hope to be unfurled even in the presence of their enemies.’

March 18 2017 Day 77 Readings Numbers 26:52-28:15, Luke 3:1-22, Psalm 61:1-8, Proverbs 11:16-17

יִפְקֹד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחַת לְכָל-בֶּשֶׂר אִישׁ עַל-הַעֲדָה אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יֵצְיֵאֻם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבִיֵאֻם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֲדַת יְהוָה כְּצֹאן אֲשֶׁר אֵין-לָהֶם רֹעֶה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה קַח-לְךָ אֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נוּן--אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסָמַכְתָּ אֶת-יָדְךָ עָלָיו
'Yiphqòd, Adonài Elohèy ha-ruchòt le-khòl basàr, ish al ha-eydàh ashèr yetzè liphnèyhem va'ashèr yabhò liphnèyhem va-ashèr yotzi'èym va-ashèr yebhi'èym ve-lò tihyèh ka-tzòn ashèr eyn lahèm ro'èh.' Va-yòmer Adonài el Moshèh, 'Qach lekhà et-Yehòshua bin Nun, ish ashèr rùach bo, ve-samàkhata et-yadkhà alàyv.

(Moses is asking God) 'Lord God of the spirits of all flesh, commission a man over the community who can go in and out before them, and can lead them in and out so that they won't be like sheep without a shepherd.' And the Lord said to Moses, 'Take to yourself Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him.'

Numbers 27.16-18/ח"ט-יח/במדבר כז"ט-יח

A reflection on Numbers 27.16-18 'The Lord has already told Moses that he will not be going into the Land of Promise because of his disobedience at Meribah. Moses is concerned for the next generation, therefore, that they should have someone who carries the people in their heart as he does, someone filled with the Lord's Spirit who will model being in God's presence as he has for them and lead them the next step. There is an obvious choice, a man who has shadowed Moses in and out of the tent of meeting, and even stayed there after Moses has left. The Lord answers the prophet's prayer with the provision of Joshua, whose name so closely foretells Messiah's name – 'The Lord will deliver.'

ποιήσατε οὖν καρπούς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας, καὶ μὴ ἄρξησθε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ· λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ.

Pièesate oun karpòus axious tees metanias, kai mee àrxeesthe lèyin en eavtis, 'Patèra èchomen ton Abhra'àm'; lègho gar ymìn òti dhýnatai o Theòs ek ton lithon tòuton eyèerai tèkna to Abhra'àm.

Produce fruit worthy of a transformed mind, and do not start saying to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you that God is able to raise children of Abraham out of these stones.

Luke 3.8/Λουκαν 3.8

A reflection on Luke 3.8 'The word in Greek, 'metànoia', is not just a decision to stop doing wrong. Just as the word 'metamòrphosis' is a complete change of shape, so 'metànoia' is a complete change of thinking, indeed, of ideology – a 'transideation'. John the Baptist is looking for actions from the people which issue from a whole new source of thought and belief, from the fact that God's reign is breaking in. This is true 'metànoia'.

καὶ καταβῆναι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον σωματικῶ, εἶδει ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν ἐπ' αὐτόν, καὶ φωνὴν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γενέσθαι λαγούσαν· σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα.

Kai katavènai to Pnèvma to Àyion somatikò, èedhee osèe peristeràn ep'avtòn, kai phonèen ex ourandou yenèsthai làgousan; sy ee o yiòs mou o agapeetòs, en si evdhòkeesa.

And the Holy Spirit came down in a physical manifestation, in the form of a dove upon Him, and a voice from the sky began to speak, 'You are my son, the one I love, in you I delight.'

Luke/Λουκαν 3.22

A reflection on Luke 3.22 'At the moment of His baptism, a dove comes and lands upon Jesus, and there is a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my well-loved, well-pleasing Son'; the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit are revealed together at this moment. Luke, eager to put the history in place, tells us that Jesus is about thirty years of age, the age when Levitical priests were ordained to enter service in the Temple.'

March 19 2017 Day 78 Readings Numbers 28;16-29:40, Luke 3:23-38, Psalm 62:1-12, Proverbs 11:18-19

Καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν Ἰησοῦς ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ἀρχόμενος, ὧν, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, υἱός, Ἰωσήφ, τοῦ Ἠλί.

Kai avtòs een Yeesòus osèe etòn triàkonda archòmenos, on os enomìzeto, yiòs Iosèeph, tou Eeli.

And Jesus had just turned thirty years of age, being, as was thought, the son of Joseph, son of Eli.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 3.22

A reflection on Luke 3.28 'Thirty years of age was the benchmark for priests entering the Temple to serve; having served a full apprenticeship under the tutelage of his foster-father, Joseph, the Son of the Most High now enters upon His public ministry which will revolutionise the world. God's timing is important, and our shaping and formation is integral to the fruit of our lives. Jesus models that in His hiddenness until the day of His revealing comes.'

אף לאלהים דומי נפשי כי ממנו תקוותי
אך-הוא צורי וישועתי משגבי לא אמוט

Akh l'Elohìm domì naphshì, ki mimènu tikvati;

Akh hu tzurì vi-yeshuatì, misgabì, lo emòt.

Surely my being waits quietly for God, for from Him is my hope;

Surely He is my rock and my rescue, my refuge, I am not shaken.

Psalm 62.5,6/ תהילים סב"ה

A reflection on Psalm 62.5,6 'The simplicity and beauty of the Singer's Hebrew poetry conveys the quiet order of his soul as he expects the Lord's intervention in his need. 'Akh l'Elohìm domì naphshì/ki mimènu tiqvati/akh hu tzurì v'yeshuatì, /misgabì, lo emòt.' (Surely my soul waits quietly for God, /for from Him derives my hope/Surely He is my rock and my rescue, my refuge; I am not shaken.) The song of worship is always a channel for God's strength into our weakness, pouring His truth into the recesses of our being.' (my translation.)

March 20 2017 Day 79 Readings Numbers 30:1-31:54, Luke 4:1-30, Psalm 63:1-11, Proverbs 11:20-21

איש כי ידר נדר ליהוה או-השבע שבעה לאסר אסר על-נפשו--לא יחל דברו ככל-
היצא מפיו יעשה

Ish ki yiddòr nèder lAdonài o ha-shàbha shibhu'à le'sòr issàr al naphshò lo yachèl dibharò ke-khòl ha-yotzè mi-pìv ya'asèh.

A man who vows to the Lord or who swears a life-binding oath to tie his soul with an obligation cannot renege on his word; he will do all that has come out of his mouth.

Numbers 30.2/ במדבר ל"ב

A reflection on Numbers 30.2 ‘It is said that talk is cheap, but when it comes to vows and oaths, God holds man accountable to do what he has said. The whole tenor of God’s instruction is for us to be very careful about what we say, only binding ourselves to what we can accomplish. Jesus actually directs His apprentice-followers not to make vows, but to let their ‘yes be yes’ and their ‘no be no.’ In a day when so many promises are made by so many people that are not delivered on, we need to be aware of our own fallibility and not be presumptuous in binding ourselves to do what we cannot guarantee.’

Καὶ ὑπέστρεψεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Πνεύματος εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· καὶ φήμη ἐξῆλθεν καθ’ ὅλης τῆς περιχώρου περὶ αὐτοῦ.

Kai ypèstrepsen o Ieesòus en tee dhynàmee tou Pnèvmato ees teen Galilàian;
kai phèemee exèelthen kath’òlees tees perichòrou perì avtòu.

And Jesus came back in the power of the Spirit to Galilee; and the news about Him went out to the whole region.

Luke 4.14/Λουκᾶν 4.14

A reflection on Luke 4.14 ‘Jesus returns, not in His own power, but in the power of the Spirit. The devil has been tempting Him to act on His own authority as the Son of God, but Jesus has consistently pointed away from Himself to the Father. For this reason, He has passed the test. He is now to announce shortly that the Spirit has anointed Him to be good news for the poor, not on His own say-so, but on the basis of His submission to other persons of Godhead, for He knows this is how all His disciples must live, immersed in the energy of the Spirit.’

March 21 2017 Day 80 Readings Numbers 32:1-33:39, Luke 4:31-5:11, Psalm 64:1-10, Proverbs 11:22

לֹא נָשׁוּב אֶל-בְּתִינוּ--עַד הַתְּנַחַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ נַחֲלָתוֹ

Lo nashùbh el batèynu ad hitnachèl benèy Yisra’èl ish nachaltò.

We will not return to our homes until the children of Israel have each received their inheritance.

Numbers 32.18/ח"י לב"י

A reflection on Numbers 32.18 ‘When the tribes of Reuben and Gad decide they want to settle east of the Jordan in the land Israel has just been fighting in, Moses is concerned that their stopping short of the promised land does not dishearten the other tribes from crossing the river to go into their inheritance, as they did earlier at Kadesh-Barnea. Moses thus lays on these two tribes the obligation to go with the rest of the nation to support them in the taking of the land; this they agree to do. We need to recognise that we are not following the Lord as individuals picking and choosing the comforting parts of His call we can easily respond to. We are called as a body, and need to act in concert with His people to see the mission of God accomplished in the earth, even when the going is tough.’

ἰδὼν δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος προσέπεσεν τοῖς γόνασιν Ἰησοῦ λέγων· ἔξελθε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι, Κύριε.

Idhòn dhe Símon Pètros prosèpesen tis gónasin Ieesòu lèghon, ‘Èxeelthe ap’emòu, òti anèer amartolòs eemi, Kýrie.

Seeing this, Simon Peter fell down at Jesus feet saying, ‘Go away from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord.’

Luke /Λουκᾶν 5.8

A reflection on Luke 5.8 ‘In the presence of Jesus’ supernatural intervention, Peter, like Isaiah before the holiness of God, is confronted by his own sense of failure and brokenness. But a few verses later, Jesus reveals his true destiny as a founder-follower of Messiah, a ‘fisher of men’. God is not about grinding us down into despair, but speaks over us the truth of who He sees us to be, transforming us into His image.’

March 22 2017 Day 81 Readings Numbers 33:40-35:34, Luke 5:12-28, Psalm 65:1-13, Proverbs 11:23

וְהָיוּ לְכֶם הָעָרִים לְמִקְלָט מִגֹּאֵל וְלֹא יָמוּת הַרְצֵחַ עַד-עֲמִדוֹ לִפְנֵי הָעֵדָה לְמִשְׁפָּט
Ve-hayù lakhèm he-arìim le-miqlàt mi-go’èl ve-lò yamùt ha-rotzèach ad-amdò liphnèy ha-eydàh la-mishpàt

And the three cities will be for you a refuge from revenge so that a homicide may not be killed before he stands trial before the assembly

Numbers 35v12/במדבר לה"ב

A reflection on Numbers 35.12 ‘God’s heart for the right-wising principles of justice make provision for those who have killed another human being without malice aforethought. To prevent the avenger of blood taking the matter into his hands, God calls for time to investigate and to try the manslayer, and therefore Israel’s cities of refuge would stand as protection for the untried. From this concept came later the offer of sanctuary in church buildings for those accused to protect them from their pursuers. Such is the heart of the God who is slow to anger.’

καὶ ἔκστασις ἔλαβεν ἅπαντας καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν Θεόν, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν φόβου λέγοντες ὅτι εἶδομεν παράδοξα σήμερον.

Kai èkstasis èlabhen àpandas kai edhòxazon ton Theòn, kai eplèestheesan phòbhrou, lègondes oti ‘èedhomen paràdhoxa sèmeron.’

And everyone was beside themselves with joy, celebrating God, and filled with awe, saying that ‘we have seen something extraordinary today!’

Luke /Λουκαν 5.26

A reflection on Luke 5.26 ‘The crowd has just witnessed Jesus forgiving the paralysed man his sins, to the shock of the religious teachers, and then raising him up from his bed to walk. They are, literally in the Greek, ‘ecstatic’ – beside themselves with amazement and awe; they exclaim that they have seen, again in the Greek, a ‘paradox’ – something which should not be and yet has taken place, something contrary to reason – the only time in the New testament that this word appears. Jesus is not bound by flat human reasoning; He leaps over the wall, both to erase failure and to raise the paralysed. No wonder they were ‘ecstatic’!

(Interestingly, Luke’s words here seem to have echoes of a verse in Greek found in the Deuterocanonical writings, in Wisdom 5.2 – ‘When they see Him, they will be struck with awe, ecstatic about His extraordinary rescue.’)

March 23 2017 Day 82 Readings Numbers 36:1-Deuteronomy 1:46, Luke 5:29-6:11, Psalm 66:1-20, Proverbs 11:24-26

וַיְהִי בְּאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּעֶשְׂתֵּי-עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּכָל
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ אֲלֵהֶם

Va-yehì be-arba’im shanàh be-ashtèy-asàr chòdesh be-echàd la-chodèsh dibbèr Moshèh el-benèy Yisra’èl ke-khòl ashèr tzivvàh Adonài otò alèyhem.

So it was in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month that Moses spoke to the children of Israel of all that the Lord had directed him about them.

Deuteronomy 1.3/דברים א"ג

A reflection on Deuteronomy 1.3 ‘Now forty years have passed for the people of Israel in the desert; all those over twenty at the time of the refusal of Israel to enter the land have died in the wilderness, including Aaron and Miriam; Moses has also been told by the Lord that he will not enter the promised land. Now, it is time for Moses to reveal to the new generation the call of God upon them, and their destiny to enter the promise of God. The word ‘Deuteronomy’ by which we call this book means ‘the second lawgiving’, the impartation of the Lord’s life-words to Israel. The Jews call it simply, ‘The Words’ (Debharim), from the opening lines of the book, recalling that God speaks and leads His people by His voice in each generation, continuing the narrative of His unfolding purposes.

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν σαββάτῳ δευτεροπρώτῳ διαπορεύεσθαι αὐτὸν διὰ τῶν σπορίμων· καὶ ἔτιλλον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τοὺς στάχυας καὶ ἤσθιον ψώχοντες ταῖς χερσὶ.

Eyèneto dhe en sabbhàto dhevteropròto dhiaporèvesthai avtòn dhià ton sporìmon; kai ètillon i matheetài avtòu tous stàchyas kai èsthion psòchondes tais chersì.

It happened that on the first sabbath following the second day of Passover, they were passing through the fields of crops; and his apprentice-followers picked the grain-heads, rubbing them with their hands and eating from them.

Luke /Λουκᾶν 6.1

A reflection on Luke 6.1 ‘Luke presents the reader with a nice puzzle in this verse. He sets this event on ‘the second-first Sabbath’, the only place such a timing is mentioned in the Scripture or in Rabbinical writings. It is harvest time, and therefore fits with the Jewish understanding of both Alfred Edersheim and the translators of the New Testament into Hebrew that this is a reference to the first Sabbath following the second day of Passover, when the first sheaf of ripened barley was waved before the Lord on the Feast of Firstfruits and the countdown begun towards Shavu’ot, the Feast of Weeks. While scholars debate this interpretation, it is clear that Luke’s readers would have understood his reference without further explanation as a common Jewish expression. They are waiting for Pentecost, both chronologically and spiritually, for the bringing in of a new era of the Spirit, when the Lord of the Sabbath comes to write the Torah on their hearts!’

יֵשׁ מִפְּזֵר וְנוֹסֵף עוֹד וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִיֶּשֶׁר אֶךְ-לְמַחְסוֹר

Yesh mephazèr ve-nosàph od, ve-chosèkh mi-yòsher, akh le-machsòr

It’s giving away that leads to greater increase, while holding on to more than is right just leads to poverty.

Proverbs 11.24/משלי יא"כד

A reflection on Proverbs 11.24 ‘God’s economics turn the world’s upside-down; to increase, says His wisdom, give more away. Hoarding what you have, thinking you will safe, just leads to loss. Jesus enshrines this understanding when He says, ‘Give, and it will be given unto you in good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.’ (Lk.6.38)

March 24 2017 Day 83 Readings Deuteronomy 2:1-3:29, Luke 6:12-38, Psalm 67:1-7, Proverbs 11:27

כי יהוה אלהיך בִּרְכָךְ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ יָדַע לְכַתֹּרְךָ אֶת-הַמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה זֶה אֲרַבְעִים שָׁנָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עִמָּךְ לֹא חָסַרְתָּ דְבָר

Ki Adonài Elohèykha beyrakhekhà be-khòl ma'asèh yadèkha; yadà lekhtekhà et-ha-midbàr ha-gadòl ha-zèh zeh arbayìm shanàh Adonài Elohèykha immàkh lo chasàrta dabhàr.

For the LORD your God blessed you in all the works of your hands; He knows your walking through this great desert these forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have not gone without anything

דברים ב"ז/27 Deuteronomy 2v7

A reflection on Deuteronomy 2.7 'The desert for the people of Israel was not a place of lack, but a place of dependent sufficiency. If we try and do our own thing without Jesus' help and sustaining, we will be impoverished. If we make His presence and His glory the fulcrum of our lives, then He will supply all we need from His treasury of blessing.'

δίδοτε, καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· μέτρον καλὸν, πεπιεσμένον καὶ σεσαλευμένον καὶ ὑπερεκχυνόμενον δώσουσιν εἰς τὸν κόλπον ὑμῶν· τῷ γὰρ αὐτῷ μέτρῳ ᾧ μετρεῖτε, ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν.

Dhìdhote, kai dhothèsetai ymìn; mètron kalòn, pepiesmènon kai sesalevmènon kai yperenchynomènon dhòsousin ees ton kòlpon ymòn. To gar avtò mètro o metrèete, andimetrethèsetai ymìn.

Give, and it will be given to you; in good measure, packed in, shaken up and overflowing they will give back into your lap. For the measure you use will be the same measure used to give back to you.

Luke /Λουκᾶν 6.38

A reflection on Luke 6.38 'One of the most pernicious things about the so-called prosperity gospel is that, in its abuse, it becomes about manipulating God to get things from Him, to accumulate for our own pleasure. Jesus makes it clear here that the main event is generosity, not getting. The key here is, what measure are we using to give? If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly. But if we pour out our hearts in generosity, God will not be anyone's debtor and we will experience abundance to enable us to pour out again in more generosity. This is the economics of God's kingdom.'

March 25 2017 Day 84 Readings Deuteronomy 4:1-49, Luke 6:39-7:10, Psalm 68:1-18, Proverbs 11:28

וַיִּגְדַּלְכֶם אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת--עֲשֵׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים וַיְכַתְּבֵם עַל-שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת אֲבָנִים

Va-yagèd lakhèm et-beritò ashèr tzivvàh etkhèm la'assòt asèret ha-debharìm va-yikhtebhèm al shney luchòt abhanìm.

And He declared His covenant with you which He directed you to enact, in ten articles, and wrote them on two stone tablets.

דברים ד"ג/13 Deuteronomy 4v13

A reflection on Deuteronomy 4.13 ‘In the English language, we have become so familiar with the term ‘the ten commandments’ that we forget the fact that the original Hebrew (and its Greek translation later) speak of the ‘ten words’. Even the Latin Vulgate has them as ‘verba’ – words. These are something akin to the articles of a constitution, the basic matrix of relationship between the Lord and His people. The English translators, somewhat focussed on the forensic nature of law, rendered them as ‘commandments’, but that is to miss the weight of their substance. These are what can be expected from a people covenanted to God – exclusivity of worship, no rivals to His affection, and His nature pouring out through them in honour, love, integrity and compassion. To reduce the ‘ten words’ to simple legal sanctions outwith their relational context is to devalue their unique nature as the covenanted outworking of the life of God’s people.’

אַרְץ רַעֲשָׂה אֶרֶץ-שָׁמַיִם נָטְפוּ מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים
זֶה סִינֵי מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Èretz rasha’ à aph shamàyim natphù mi-pnèy Elohim,
Zeh Sinài, mi-pnèy Elohim, Elohèy Yisra’èl.

The earth shook, and even the heavens were distilled into droplets in the presence of God,
That is, at Sinai, in the face of God, the God of Israel.

Psalm 68.8/תהילים סח"ט

A reflection on Psalm 68.8 ‘In Deuteronomy 4, verses 33 and 36 Moses reminds Israel that they heard the voice of God Himself speaking to them out of the fire on Sinai. Tragically, they recoiled from Him in fear, refusing to listen, asking Moses to mediate instead. But God’s desire is to be with His people in the full-weighted glory of His presence, close up with them face to face, cheek to cheek. When this happened at Sinai, the Singer of Israel says, earth was moved and heaven condensed into drops among them. With the removal of the veil between God and His people by the death of Jesus, His resurrection, ascension and immersion of us in His Spirit now, we can experience those drops of heaven distilling into our lives and earth around us, as His presence-face comes close each day to us, His beloved children.’

March 26 2017 Day 85 Readings Deuteronomy 5:1-6:25, Luke 7:11-35, Psalm 68:19-35, Proverbs 11:29-31

שִׁמְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד
וְאַהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ

Shemà Yisraèl; Adonài Elohèynu Adonài Echàd.

Ve-ahabhtà et-Adonài Elohèykha be-khòl lebhobh-khà u-bhe-khòl naphshekhà u-bhe-khòl me’odèkha.

Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

And you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your inner being, and with all your outward strength.

Deuteronomy 6.4,5/דברים ו"ד ה

A reflection on Deuteronomy 6.4,5. ‘ ‘Hear, O Israel...’ These profound words spoken by God through Moses to Israel are underlined to followers of Messiah Jesus as chief of all directives by which He shapes our lives. Notice, though, they are not, in fact, a command but a promise; the imperative is not used here. It is not a demand for worship but a call to love, something which can never be coerced. When we connect with the supreme uniqueness, the soaring One-ness of our Creator who is also our Father, and His love and desire for us, our logical response can only be abandonment of all we are and have to our incomparable Beloved.’

ἐλήλυθεν ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων, καὶ λέγετε· ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος φάγος καὶ οἰνοπότης, φίλος τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν. καὶ ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς πάντων.

Elèlythen o Yiòs tou anthròrou esthìon kai pìnion, kai lèyete; idhòu ànthropos phàgos kai inopòtees, philos telonòn kai amartolòn. Kai edhikaiòthee ee sophìa apò ton tèknon avtèes pànton.

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a greedy wino, who hangs out with fraternising taxmen and low-lifes.' But wisdom is proved right by all those born of her. Luke/Λουκᾶν 7.34,35

A reflection on Luke 7.34,35 'Jesus speaks out against those who are not listening to God, who accuse John of being of the devil because of his ascetic lifestyle, while they malign Jesus as a hedonist because He goes to parties with sinners. There is no pleasing these people, who are showing themselves not to be 'children of wisdom.'

בְּרִיךְ אֲדֹנָי יוֹם יוֹם יַעֲמֵס-לָנוּ--הָאֵל יְשׁוּעָתָנוּ סְלָה
הָאֵל לָנוּ אֵל לְמוֹשָׁעוֹת וְלִיהוּהָ אֲדֹנָי--לְמִוֹת תְּצַוֹת

Barùkh Adonài yom yom ya'màs lànù, ha-Èl Yeshu'atèynu, Sèlah;

Ha-Èl lànù El le-mosha'òt ve-l'Elohìm Adonài la-màvet totza'òt.

Blessed be the Lord, who carries our burden for us day to day, the God of our Rescue;
(Pause for an instrumental)

The God who is for us, the God of salvation and the LORD God who knows the exit route from death.

Psalm 68.19,20/תהילים סח"י ט כ

A reflection on Psalm 68.19,20 'Holy Saturday; our rescue sealed by the blood of the Lamb at the cross; as at the ending of J S Bach's St Matthew Passion, we wish Him the 'selah' of 'gentle rest' ('sanfte Ruh'), sharing with us our grave and its silence. Yet, the Psalmist prophesies, this One will show us the exit-route from the tomb on Easter Day, for He has in His mouth the last word over it, and it will not give death the final say!'

March 27 2017 Day 86 Readings Deuteronomy 7:1-8:20, Luke 7:36-8:3, Psalm 69:1-18, Proverbs 12:1

καὶ στραφεὶς πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα τῷ Σίμωνι ἔφη· βλέπεις ταύτην τὴν γυναῖκα; εἰσηλθὼν σου εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν, ὕδωρ ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας μου οὐκ ἔδωκας· αὕτη δὲ τοῖς δάκρυσιν ἔβρεξέ μου τοὺς πόδας καὶ ταῖς θριξὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς ἐξέμαξε.

Kai straphèes pros teen yeenàika to Simoni èphee, 'Bhlèpis tàvteen teen yeenàika? Isèel-thòn-sou ees teen ikìan, ýdhor epì tous pòdhas mou ouk èdhokas; avtèe dhe tis dhàkrysin èbhrex-èμου tous pòdhas kai tais thrixì tees kephalèes avtèes exèmaxe.

And turning to the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I came into your house, and you didn't give me any water to wash my feet; yet she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her own head.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 7.44

A reflection on Luke 7.44 ‘How often in the accounts of Jesus’ life have women been there where the men have not; here, the men sit judging Jesus while the woman bathes His feet in tears. A few verses later, at the start of Luke 8, women are supporting Jesus from their own means; and it is women who stand weeping at the cross when the twelve have gone, all apart from John. No wonder then, in the bringing in of the new age, that the women are the first witnesses of His breaking out of the tomb; they come to care and anoint, with their tears, with their spices, and leave, their hearts in awe but alive with good news of resurrection!’

וְאֲנִי תְפִלְתִּי-לְךָ יְהוָה עַת רְצוֹן אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב-חֶסֶדְךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמַּת יִשְׁעֶךָ
Va-anì tephillatì le-khà Adonài et ratzòn; Elohim be-ràbh chasdèkha anèyni be-èmet yishèkha
As for me, my prayer is coming to you, LORD, just at the right moment; O God, in the abundance of your covenant-bonded grace, respond to me out of the reliability of your rescue.
תהילים סט"ג/13v69 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 69.13 ‘God’s rescue comes out of His covenant. It is because He has obliged Himself to His people that we can be sure of His response. His salvation, His rescue is assured by His own character; He cannot be untrue to His nature.’

March 28 2017 Day 87 Readings Deuteronomy 9:1-10:22, Luke 8:4-21, Psalm 69:19-36, Proverbs 12:2-3

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מַה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׂאֵל מֵעַמָּךְ כִּי אִם-לִירְאָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּכָל-
דְּרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ וּלְעַבְדוֹ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ
Ve-attàh, Yisraèl, mah Adonài Elohèykha sho’èl mey-immàkh, ki im le-yiràh et-Adonài
Elohèykha, la-lèkhet be-khòl derakhàyv, u-le-ahavàh otò ve-la’avòd et-Adonài Elohèykha
bekhòl levovekhà u-ve-khòl naphshèkha?

And now, Israel, what is the LORD your God asking of you, other than to be in awe of the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your being?

דברים י"ב/10v12 Deuteronomy

A reflection on Deuteronomy 10.12 ‘Here in one verse is summed up the life lived close to God – a living in awed dependence, loving and heeding Him, and wholeheartedly carrying out His desires. It is not hard, when lived out of passionate relationship with Him, made eminently possible for us this side of Calvary by the Holy Spirit living in us day by day.’

Ἔστι δὲ αὕτη ἡ παραβολή· ὁ σπόρος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Èsti dhe avtèe ee parabolèe; o spòros estin o lògos tou Theòu.

This is the metaphor; what is sown is the word of God.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 8.11

A reflection on Luke 8.11 ‘A parable is a metaphor; it stands for something behind its surface meaning. For those who live on the surface, it is simply a story from everyday life, a tale. For those who look and listen deeper, it is a signpost to more profound truth. The disciples struggle to connect with the meaning beyond the story. Jesus unveils it; the broadcasting of the seed is the broadcasting of the word of God, in particular, of Jesus, who is the Word of God incarnate. This is not so much about the study of a book as about the Spirit of God reproducing the image of the Man in every corner of history. Will I let Him produce in me the harvest He intends?’

March 29 2017 Day 88 Readings Deuteronomy 11:1-12:32, Luke 8:22-39, Psalm 70:1-5, Proverbs 12:4

הַשְּׁמַר לְךָ פֶּן-תִּנְקַשׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵי הַשְּׂמֹדִם מִפְּנֵיךָ וּפֶן-תִּדְרֹשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר אֵיכָּה יַעֲבֹדוּ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֶת-אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וְאֵעֲשֶׂה-כֵן גַּם-אֲנִי לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כֵן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
Hishamèr lekha pen tinnaqèsh acharèyhem acharèy ha-shomdàm mipnèkha, u-phèn tidròsh l'elohèyhem lemòr, 'Eykhàh ya'abhdù ha-goyim ha-èleh et-elohèyhem? Ve-e'esèh ken gam anì.' Lo ta-asèh khen l'Adonài Elohèykha.

Beware that you don't get trapped into behaving like the vanquished nations before you, in case you investigate their gods saying 'How did those nations worship their gods? Maybe I'll do the same.' Don't do that to the LORD your God

דברים יב"ל לא/12v30,31

A reflection on Deuteronomy 12.30 'God's warning here about comparing Him with the religious practices of the non-god-worshipping nations is a very personal one. When they weigh the Lord's covenant with the rituals of empty idolatry, they are doing something unfaithful to Him. They will not listen, of course, and they will become enmeshed in the base practices of the other peoples, leading them to break covenant with the Lover of their souls. For us, there is a warning here about putting our God on a par with any other being. Jesus is the name above every name; there is no other name through which rescue and meaning comes to us. When we refuse this uniqueness, we insult the One who loved and gave Himself for us.'

ὑπόστρεφε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου καὶ διηγοῦ ὅσα ἐποίησέ σοι ὁ Θεός. καὶ ἀπήλθε καθ' ὅλην τὴν πόλιν κηρύσσων ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

'Ypòstrephe ees ton èekòn-sou kai dhi-eeghòu òsa epì-eesè-si o Theòs'; kai apèelthe kath'òleen teen pòlin keerýsson òsa epì-eesen avtò o Yeesòus.

(Jesus is speaking to the Gadarene, delivered of demons.)

'Go back to your home and report fully the things God has done for you'; and he went off, announcing through the whole city the things Jesus had done for him.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 8.39

A reflection on Luke 8.39 'Despite the local efforts to shut Jesus up about His deliverance of the demonised man of Gadara, Jesus commissions him to recount to others his being set free, which he immediately does. Our story cannot be silenced, the story of a Rescuer who has transformed our bondage into liberty. The powers would have us go quietly into a stone box and sing our songs there, but Jesus commissions us to go into the open market-place to celebrate the awesome things God has done. Note also, that where the Lord tells the man to share about God's deliverance, Luke has him speaking of what Jesus has done – the two being One!'

March 30 2017 Day 89 Readings Deuteronomy 13:1-15:23, Luke 8:40-9:6, Psalm 71:1-24, Proverbs 12:5-7

מִקֶּץ שִׁבְע־שָׁנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה שְׂמִטָּה

Miqqètz shèbha shanìm ta'asèh shmittàh.

At the end of each seven years, you will enact a writing-off (of debt.)

דברים טו"א/15v1

A reflection on Deuteronomy 15.1 ‘The Lord knows how tying debt can be and so directs the writing-off of debt every seven years. In the days of the giving of Torah, a debtor could be enslaved to the creditor until repayment in service was made. But the Lord both reminds Israel that He freed them for freedom, having been slaves to Pharaoh, and also ensures that no one of His people can hold another in perpetuity – unless there is a bond of love which gives itself freely to serve (see Deut.15.16-17). The seven-year debt amnesty is puzzling for us in modern times, but reminds us that we are not the owners of the earth, only stewards, and do not have the right to enslave anyone by indebtedness, for this outrages the heart of God.’

καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς κηρύσσειν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἰᾶσθαι τοὺς ἀσθενοῦντας

Kai apèsteelen avtòus keerýssin teen bhasilèian tou Theòu kai yàsthai tous asthenòundas.

And He commissioned them to announce the reign of God and to heal those suffering illness.

Luke 9.2/Λουκᾶν 9.2

A reflection on Luke 9.2 ‘Jesus has modelled to His disciples His mission, and now He sends them as His envoys to establish new colonies of heaven under His Father’s reign, announcing that the Lord is King and demonstrating His authority by releasing people from suffering as a sign of the coming new creation. Jesus’ commission to His first disciples is ours also, since it is the same Holy Spirit who resides in all of us, His people. He is the power of the King who actions the proclamation of freedom; we are the heralds, He is the enactor of the promise.’

March 31 2017 Day 90 Readings Deuteronomy 16:1-17:20, Luke 9:7-27, Psalm 72:1-20, Proverbs 12:8-9

א-תִּטֶּה מִשְׁפָּט לֹא תִכְרַם פְּנִים וְלֹא-תִקַּח שֹׁחַד כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יַעֲוֶר עֵינֵי הַחֲכָמִים וְיִסְלַף דְּבָרֵי צְדִיקִים

Lo tàtteh mishpàt, lo takkìr panìm velò tiqqàch shochàd, ki ha-shochàd ye’abhèr eynèy chokhamìm vi-sallèph devarèy tzaddiqìm.

Do not pervert justice, do not show favouritism and do not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the upright

Deuteronomy 16v19/טז"ט דברים

A reflection on Deuteronomy 16.19 ‘In Hebrew, the term ‘to show favouritism’ is ‘to scrutinise the face.’ When we prefer one person over another, it is often because we are looking for their favourable, or even are afraid of their unfavourable reactions, so we act according to what we want their face to say. Justice, so the Romans had it, is blind. And so, it seems, is the justice God looks for. We should not administer justice to either get or avoid a reaction, but according to wisdom and integrity.’

καὶ ἔφαγον καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν πάντες, καὶ ἦρθη τὸ περισσεῦσαν αὐτοῖς κλασμάτων κόφιννοι δώδεκα.

Kai èphaghon, kai echortàstheesan pàndes, kai èerthee to perissèvsan avtìs klasmàton kòphini dhòdheka.

And they ate, and everyone was satisfied, and they gathered up the leftovers and had twelve basketfuls of crumbs.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 9.17

A reflection on Luke 9.17 ‘Sometimes we are in danger of making God out to be stingy, just giving enough and no more. Yet here, from the miracle-feast of loaves and fishes we find, not that the food just stretched and then stopped, but that there was a great surfeit of crumbs! It reminds us that this is the God whom Jesus teaches us to ask ‘give us today plenty of bread’ (in Greek, ‘epiousion’, above what is essential.) We have a God who supplies all our needs to the measure of His glorious wealth, not so that we can hoard it, but so that we have plenty and share what is left over!’

April 1 2017 Day 91 Readings Deuteronomy 18:1-20:20, Luke 9:28-50, Psalm 73:1-28, Proverbs 12:10

אֲשֶׁר יִדְבַר הַנְּבִיא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְלֹא-יְהִי הַדְּבָר וְלֹא יבֹא--הוּא הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-דִבֶּר
יְהוָה בְּזִדּוֹן דִּבְרוּ הַנְּבִיא לֹא תִגּוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ

Ashèr yedabbèr ha-nàbhi be-shèm Adonài ve-lò yihyèh ha-dabhàr ve-lò yabhò hu ha-dabhàr
ashèr lo dibbrò Adonài, be-zadòn dibbrò ha-nàbhi lo tagòor mimènnu.

If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and that thing doesn't happen and the thing he said doesn't come about, he has not spoken in the Lord's name; that prophet has spoken out of presumption and you don't need to worry about him.

Deuteronomy 18v22/כב"ח דברים יח

A reflection on Deuteronomy 18.22 ‘There are so many voices that purport to speak with the Lord's authority, sometimes in contradiction of one another. The litmus-test for the people of Israel of a prophet was whether the thing he said actually came about. If it did not, he was speaking out of presumption, and could safely be ignored. A few verses earlier, there is the promise of one prophet like Moses who is coming, in whose mouth would be the very words of God. All those who then speak afterwards are to be tested by His witness, for, as the Visionary John later says, ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’ (Rev. 19.10)

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο συνελάλουν αὐτῷ, οἵτινες ἦσαν Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας, οἱ
ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ ἣν ἤμελλε πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ.
Kai idhòu àndres dhýo synelàloun avtò, ìtines èsan Moeesès kai Eelias, ee ophthèndes en
dhòxee èlegon teen èxodhon avtòu een èmelle pleeròun en Ierousalèem.

And right there two men were talking to Him (Jesus), that is, Moses and Elijah, appearing in glory, speaking about His exodus which was about to be enacted in Jerusalem.

Luke 9.30,31/Λουκᾶν 9.30,31

A reflection on Luke 9.30,31. ‘Here, as Jesus is transformed before them into His resurrected glory, as though He were being fitted for the future, the two greatest prophets of Israel, Moses and Elijah break upon the scene in their transcendent state, anticipating the coming cataclysm which will see earth break into heaven, as the risen Jesus, triumphant from His death and resurrection will enter into His Father's presence, and release the Holy Spirit upon His people. Luke deliberately uses the word ‘exodus’ here as the matter under discussion, since what is coming is a deliverance greater than the release from Egypt; mankind will be reconciled finally to God.’

Lk 9.28 Gk 4'07 Heb 3'59

April 2 2017 Day 92 Readings Deuteronomy 21:1-22:30, Luke 9:51-10:12, Psalm 74:1-23, Proverbs 12:11

כי תבנה בית חדש ועשית מעקה לגגך ולא-תשים דמים בביתך כי-יפל הנפל ממנו
Ki tibhnèh bàyit chadàsh ve-asitah ma'aqèh le-gaggèkha ve-lò tasim damim be-bheytekha ki-yippòl ha-nophèl mimènnu.

So when you build a new house, you need to make a balustrade around the roof so that you don't bring bloodguilt upon your home by someone falling down from it.

Deuteronomy 22v8/ח"כ דברים

A reflection on Deuteronomy 22.8 'In case we should ever think the directives given to Israel by God are just full of arcane and irrelevant statutes, here is an instruction which would fit well in the health and safety culture of twenty-first century developed nations; when a new house is built, it is to have a balustrade around the roof – the place people would use to rest and socialise – to prevent anyone accidentally falling from the height, for which liability would rest with the owner. Such is the wisdom of the Lord in Scripture, caring for the wellbeing of humanity.'

ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήμψεως αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ

Eyèneto dhe en to sympleeròusthai tas eemèras tees analèempseos avtòu kai avtòs to pròsopon estèerisen tou porèvesthai ees Ierousalèm.

So it was that, as the days counted down towards His being taken upward, He also resolutely set His face, on course for Jerusalem.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 9.51

A reflection on Luke 9.51 'Jesus now 'sets his face' to go to Jerusalem knowing that the time has come for a showdown with the religious leaders and agitators who are misrepresenting His Father so badly, knowing they will connive at His execution; but Jesus knows the final outcome is rescue for mankind from their self-inflicted exile from God.'

April 3 2017 Day 93 Readings Deuteronomy 23:1-25:19, Luke 10:13-37, Psalm 75:1-10 Proverbs 12:12-14

וְלֹא-אַבָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמַע אֶל-בְּלַעַם וַיְהַפֵּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ אֶת-הַקְּלָלָה לְבִרְכָה כִּי אָהַבְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

Ve-lò avàh Adonài Elohèykha lishmòà el-Bil'àm va-yahaphòkh Adonài Elohèykha lekhà et-ha-qelalà li-verakhàh ki ahèvkha Adonài Elohèykha.

But the LORD your God did not agree to listen to Balaam, so the LORD your God transformed that curse upon you into a blessing because the LORD your God loves you

Deuteronomy 23v6/ו"כג דברים

A reflection on Deuteronomy 23.6 'From the Northumbria Community's 'Celtic Daily Prayer' comes this meditation;

'Every curse becomes a blessing to the people of God's choosing.
He who spoke it shall perform it, He shall bring on us the blessing,
Though the enemy may fight, my Jesus has done all things right.'

πλὴν ἐν τούτῳ μὴ χαίrete, ὅτι τὰ πνεύματα ὑμῶν ὑποτάσσεται· χαίrete δὲ ὅτι τὰ ὀνόματα ὑμῶν ἐγγράφη ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

Pleen en tòuto mee chàirete, òti ta pnèvmata ymìn ypotàssetai; chàirete dhe òti ta onòmata ymòn eghràphee en tis ouranìs.

All the same, don't celebrate the fact that the spirits submit to you; instead, celebrate the fact that your names are written in heaven.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 10.20

A reflection on Luke 10.20 'When we see wonderful things happen in Jesus' name it is so easy to take the credit to ourselves for what is going on; we see people with great gifts able to promote themselves into celebrity. But Jesus points to the true miracle, the real glory, which is in the fact that His mercy has rescued us, lost people, and inscribed our names among the holy ones in His homeland, where we will be with Him forever!'

April 4 2017 Day 94 Readings Deuteronomy 26:1-27:26, Luke 10:38-11:13, Psalm 76:1-12, Proverbs 12:15-17

הַשְׁקִיפָה מִמַּעוֹן קִדְשֶׁךָ מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבִרְךָ אֶת-עַמֶּךָ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָנוּ--כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ

Hashkìphah mime'òn qodshekhà, min ha-shamàyim u-bharèkh et-amkhà, et Yisraèl ve-et ha-adamàh ashèr natàttah lànu, ka-ashèr nishbà'ta la-abhotèynu, èretz zabhàt chalàbh u-debhàsh. Look out from Your holy residence in heaven and bless Your people Israel, and the land which you gave to us by reason of an oath made to our forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 26v15/ט"ו כו"דברים

A reflection on Deuteronomy 26.15 'The presentation of a basket of seven kinds of produce of the land (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates) is derived from this directive in Deuteronomy 26 and connected with the feast of Shabhu'ot (Pentecost), when the plenty of the land is celebrated by an offering of the firstfruits (bikkurim). Jesus' resurrection took place on the initial festival of first harvest (reshit ha-qatzir), the second day of Passover, which related to the bringing of a sheaf of barley, but there is a wider fulfilment to come, when the Spirit of God is poured out on His people and there is great fruitfulness, foreshadowed in Israel with this festival of joy.'

εἶπε δὲ αὐτοῖς· ὅταν προσεύχησθε, λέγετε· Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου· ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς·

Èepe dhe avtis; 'Òtan prosévcheesthe, lèyete, 'Pater eemòn, o en tees ouranìs, ayiasthèeto to ònomà-sou, elthèto ee bhasilèia sou, yeneethèeto to thèleemà-sou, os en ouranò kai epì tees yees.'

Then He said to them, 'When you pray, say, 'Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy, may Your reign come, may Your desire be done on the earth as it is in heaven.'

Luke 11.2/Λουκᾶν 11.2

A reflection on Luke 11.2, ' In this, the most often-spoken prayer of Jesus, He teaches us to speak to God as our Father, acknowledging immediately our privileged place as His beloved children; we call for His name to remain unrivalled in our lives above all other things, and for His royal rule to materialise around and through us, His desire to be fulfilled in the visible world around us as it is in the unseen realm of His love. We can never exhaust the depth and breadth of this amazing expression of love for the One who has loved us forever through His Son.'

April 5 2017 Day 95 Readings Deuteronomy 28:1-68, Luke 11:14-36, Psalm 77:1-20, Proverbs 12:18

וְנָתַןְךָ יְהוָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב וְהָיִיתָ רֹק לְמַעַלָּה וְלֹא תִהְיֶה לְמִטָּה כִּי-תִשְׁמַע אֶל-מִצְוֹת
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם--לְשִׁמֹּר וְלַעֲשׂוֹת

U-netankhà Adonài le-ròsh ve-lò le-zanàbh, ve-hayìtah raq le-ma'làh ve-lò tihyèh le-mattàh, ki tishmà el-mitzvòt Adonài Elohèykha ashèr anokhì metzàvvekha ha-yòm, lishmòr ve-la-assòt.

And the Lord will grant you to be the head and not the tail, and you will be on top and not beneath, if you will listen to the directions of the Lord your God in which I have directed you today, keeping to and doing them.

דברים כח"ג/28v13

A reflection on Deuteronomy 28.13 ‘The tragedy of Israel is the tragedy of man; promised life, blessing and security, they choose strife, curses and death, all because they will not entrust themselves to the directives of the One who knows them because He made them. Yet God’s love is persistent and will not give up His people to His enemy. His stated purpose is to cover the earth with His glory as the waters cover the sea.’

Τῶν δὲ ὄχλων ἐπαθροισομένων ἤρξατο λέγειν· ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη γενεὰ πονηρὰ ἐστὶ σημεῖον ζητεῖ καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ τοῦ προφήτου.

Ton dhe òchlòn epathrizomènon, èerxato lèyin; ee yeneà avtèe yeneà poneerà esti; seemèion zeetèe kai seemèion ou dhothèesetai avtèe ee mee to seemèion Yonà tou prophèetou.

As the crowd pressed in He (Jesus) started by saying, ‘This generation is an evil generation; it looks for a spectacular sign, but nothing will be granted to it save the sign of Jonah the prophet.’

Λουκᾶν 11.29

A reflection on Luke 11.29 ‘Jesus speaks of the sign of the prophet Jonah, who was three days in the belly of the fish, pointing to Himself, the Messiah who would be confined to the tomb, but like Jonah, would be delivered from the depths to bring the good news of redemption. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus comes to us again from the darkness of death to promise us His Father’s kingdom presence and His loving pardon. Like that of Jonah, it is an outrageous sign!’

April 6 2017 Day 96 Readings Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20, Luke 11:37-12:7, Psalm 78:1-31. Proverbs 12:19-20

הַנִּסְתָּרֹת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַגְלֹת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד-עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת
Ha-nistaròt l’Adonài Elohèynu, ve-ha-niglòt lanù u-le-bhanèynu ad-olàm, la’asòt et-kol-
dibhrèy ha-toràh ha-zòt

The mysteries belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed are ours and our children's forever, so that we do everything directed here

דברים כט"ט/29v29

A reflection on Deuteronomy 29.29 ‘We know God only by the fact that He reveals Himself to us. We are not given to know everything God knows, since we are mortal and He is immortal and eternal. But the glorious thing is that God has let us know so much of His plans and intentions, particularly through the greatest of His revelations, our Lord Jesus Christ, making us wise, as Paul says, to the unending life offered to us through Him.’

οὐχὶ πέντε στρουθία πωλεῖται ἀσσαρίων δύο; καὶ ἐν ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιλελησμένον ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ. ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ τρίχες τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν πᾶσαι ἠρίθμηνται. μὴ οὖν φοβεῖσθε· πολλῶν στρουθίων διαφέρετε.

Ouchì pènde strouthìa polèetai assarìon dhýo? kai en ex avtòn ouk èstin epileleeseemènon enòpion tou Theòu. Allà kai ai trìches tees kephalèes ymòn pàsai eerìthmeentai. Mee oun phobhèesthe; pollòn strouthìon dhiaphèrete.

Are not five sparrows sold for two assarion? Yet one of them is not overlooked before God. But also the hairs of your head are all counted. So then don't be afraid. You worth more than many sparrows.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 12.6,7

A reflection on Luke 12.6,7 ‘Jesus infers that there will be great trouble and resistance ahead for His followers. He calls them not to be afraid of those who have the power of capital punishment, for they cannot touch the inner reality of man. His followers are worth more to God than the birds for which He also cares. Jesus encourages them to hold fast their confession, which will be challenged soon in courts and before tribunals. The Holy Spirit, against whom much will be said, will Himself aid them in their defence. Luke may well have in mind some of the testimony he will later record from Peter, Stephen and Paul before such courts.’

וְיָשִׁימוּ בְּאֱלֹהִים כְּסֵלָם וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּחוּ מֵעֲלֵי-אֵל וּמִצְוֹתָיו יִנְצְרוּ
וְלֹא יִהְיוּ כְּאַבְוֹתָם-- דֹּר סוֹרֵר וּמֹרֵה
דֹּר לֹא-הֶכִּין לְבוֹ וְלֹא-נִאֲמָנָה אֶת-אֵל רֹחוֹ

Ve-yasìmu bElohìm kislàm, ve-lò yishkechù ma'alelèy El u-mitzvotàv yintzòru,

Ve-lò yihyù ka-abhotàm, dor sorèr u-morèh, dor lo heykhìn libbò ve-lò ne'emnàh et-Èl ruchò. So that (the next generation) might put their confidence in God, not forgetting what God did, sticking with His instructions,

Unlike their fathers, a stubborn and bitter generation, with warped hearts and a spirit unfaithful to God.

Psalm 78.7-8/ח"ז תהילים עח"ז

A reflection on Psalm 78.7-8 ‘The Singer of Israel is sure that God never gives up on anyone, even though they seem so hardhearted and unfaithful. He foresees a generation who will, unlike their faithless forefathers, remember who blessed them and gave them breath and will turn once more to Him and His life-key instructions, restoring again the wholeness and wellbeing of His people.’

April 7 2017 Day 97 Readings Deuteronomy 31:1-32:27, Luke 12:8-34, Psalm 78:32-55, Proverbs 12:21-23

כְּנֶשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוֹ עַל-גּוֹזְלָיו יִרְחַף יִפְרֹשׁ כְּנָפָיו יִקְחֵהוּ יִשְׂאֵהוּ עַל-אַבְרָתוֹ יְהוָה בְּדָד יִנְחֵנוּ
וְאֵין עִמוֹ אֵל נֹכַר

Ke-nèsher ya'ir qinnò al-gozalàv, yerachèph yiphròsh kenphàv, yiqachèhu yissa'èhu al-abhratò, Adonài badàd yanchènu, ve-èyn immò el nekhàr

Like an eagle watches over its nest and broods over its young, as it spreads out its wings and takes and carries them on its pinions, so the LORD alone led them, without the involvement of any alien god

Deuteronomy 32v11&12/יב"א דברים לב"א

A reflection on Deuteronomy 32.11,12 ‘The eagle trains her young to fly by pushing them out of the nest, causing them to flap their wings. But she is always ready to fly beneath them and catch them in case they come to harm. God is saying to us ‘it’s time to fly!’ He is able to see us through every danger and to teach us to soar with Him on the currents of His Spirit.’

ταῦτα γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τοῦ κόσμου ἐπιζητεῖ ὑμῶν δὲ ὁ πατὴρ οἶδεν ὅτι
χρηζετε τούτων. πλὴν ζητεῖτε τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα
προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.

Tàvta gar pànda ta èthnee tou kòsmou epizeetèe; ymòn dhe o patèer ìdhen òti chrèezete tòuton. Pleen, zeetèete teen bhasilèian avtòu, kai tàvta pànda prostethèsetai ymìn.

For all these things the masses of the world crave; but your Father sees that you need them. Rather, pursue His kingly rule and everything else will come with it.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 12.30,31

A reflection on Luke 12.30,31 ‘Jesus does not teach an ethereal, immaterial detachment from physical life and its provisions; rather, He warns against making those the things we pursue. While the masses put their faith in perishable goods, Jesus calls His apprentices to go after the real treasure of the royal presence of God, who, in His loving Fatherhood knows already what we need, and plentifully provides for us.’

April 8 2017 Day 98 Readings Deuteronomy 32:28-52, Luke 12:35-59, Psalm 78:56-64, Proverbs 12:24

כִּי לֹא-דַבַּר רַק הוּא מִכֶּם כִּי-הוּא חַיִּיכֶם וּבְדַבַּר הַזֶּה תִּאָּרִיכוּ יָמִים עַל-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם
עֹבְרִים אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ

Ki lo dabhàr reyq hu mikèm, ki hu chayèykhèm u-bha-dabhàr ha-zèh ta’arikhù yamim al-ha-adamàh ashèr attèm obhrìm et-ha-Yardèn shàmah le-rishtàh.

For this (directive) is not some vacuous idea for you, but it will be life to you and by means of it you will extend your days in the land to which you are crossing over the Jordan, there to inherit it.

Deuteronomy 32.47/דברים לב"מ"ז

A reflection on Deuteronomy 32.47 ‘Too often, like Israel, we regard God’s instruction as suggestion, not recognising that what He has given for our direction is not nice ideas, but life itself to us. When we do not take our Creator at His word, living in accordance with His perfect insight into us as His beloved children, we find ourselves rapidly sucked into the quicksands of human wilfulness and brokenness. Even as Moses hands over to Joshua, he laments that hard-necked Israel will not listen to God’s wisdom. Are we not kin to them and their independent minds?’

καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι ὅτι ἤ ὥρα οὐ δοκεῖτε ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
ἔρχεται.

Kai ymìs oun yìnesthe ètimi; òti ee òra ou dhokèete o Yiòs tou anthròpou èrchetai.

And so be ready; for at the moment you don’t expect it, the Son of man will come.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 12.40

A reflection on Luke 12.40 ‘On the headland of Dodman’s Point, Cornwall, minister Rev. George Martin had a cross erected in 1896; its inscription reads, ‘In the firm hope of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the encouragement of those who strive to serve Him this cross is erected.’ Martin gave up his country living and went to serve the poor of Southwark in London for forty years, a man readying himself for the Lord’s coming. How am I myself preparing for that day which Jesus promises will come when I least expect it?’

April 9 2017 Day 99 Readings Deuteronomy 33:1-29, Luke 13:1-21, Psalm 78:65-72, Proverbs 12:25

אין כאל ישרון רכב שמים בעזרך ובגאונתו שחקים

Eyn ka-Èl Yeshurùn, rokhèyv shamàyim be-ezrèkha, u-ve-ga'avatò shechaqim.

There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the skies to come to your aid, whose majesty is in the clouds

Deuteronomy 33v26/כ"ו לג דברים

A reflection on Deuteronomy 33.26 'The word 'Jeshurun' used in this verse denotes the people of Israel, and derives from a word meaning upright, having integrity. It appears four times in the Bible, three times in Deuteronomy, and once in Isaiah, (Isa.44.2) where the promise is that this God of Jeshurun will pour our His Spirit on His people. The glory here goes not to Israel, but to the amazing rescuer God who brings heaven to earth to come the aid of those in need.'

Καὶ πάλιν εἶπε· τίني ὁμοιώσω τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ; ὁμοία ἐστὶ ζύμη, ἣν λαβοῦσα γυνὴ ἔκρυπεν εἰς ἀλεύρου σάτα τρία, ἕως οὗ ἐζυμώθη ὅλον.

Kai pàlin èepe, 'Tini omiòso teen bhasilèian tou Theòu? Omìa estì zýmee, een labhòusa yinèe èkrypsen ees alèvròu sàta trìà, èos ou ezymòthee òlon.

And another time He said, 'With what shall I parallel the royal reign of God? It's like yeast, that a woman takes and hides in a bushel of flour until the whole thing rises.'

Luke/Λουκᾶν 13.21

A reflection on Luke 13.21 'Jesus says that the coming in of God's presence to the current age is like yeast working on dough, a small amount, integrated but transformative, turning flour into bread. The kingdom of God is never forcibly imposed on the republic of man, but subverts and transforms it through its raising agent, the working of the Holy Spirit in God's people to reproduce heaven here.'

April 10 2017 Day 100 Readings Deuteronomy 34:1-Joshua 2:24, Luke 13:22-14:6, Psalm 79:1-13, Proverbs 12:26

וַעֲתָה הַשְּׁבַע-נָא לִי בַיהוָה כִּי-עָשִׂיתִי עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד וְעָשִׂיתֶם גַּם-אִתָּם עִם-בֵּית אָבִי חֶסֶד וְנָתַתֶּם לִי אוֹת אֲמַת

Ve-atàh hishabh'ù-na li b'Adonài ki asiti imakhèm chàsed ve-asitèm gam-atèm im bet abhì chèsed u-netàtem li ot èmet.

And now swear to me by the Lord, that as I have enacted chesed (the obligations of covenant) toward you, so you will also do chesed to my father's household and give me a trustworthy sign of confirmation.

Joshua 2v12/ב"ב י"ב יהושוע

A reflection on Joshua 2.12 'Rahab of Jericho, possibly a shrine prostitute of the Canaanite nature religion, understands the principles of covenant-making. She has taken the Israelite spies under her roof, putting her family at risk, offering the covenant of hospitality to them, a strong bond in middle eastern culture. Now she asks them to act towards her under the same mutual obligation to that covenant, (Hebrew, 'chesed') sparing her family from the coming destruction and giving a reliable, trustworthy guarantee of their safety. They do so, and she lives to become an ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ, one of four women specifically mentioned in His lineage in Matthew 1.'

ἰδοὺ ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος· λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ με ἴδητε ἕως ἂν ἦξη ὅτε εἴπητε· εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου.

Idhòu aphìetai ymìn o ìkos ymòn èreemos; lègo dhe ymìn òti ou mee me ìdheete èos an èexee òte èepeete, 'evloyeemènos o erchòmenos en onòmati kyriou.'

Look, your house is left to you deserted; I am telling you that you won't see me again until you find yourselves saying, 'Welcome to the One who has come in the Lord's name!'

Luke/Λουκᾶν 13.35

A reflection on Luke 13 'Jesus lifts up a lament over the city of Jerusalem, which He has longed to gather to Himself like a hen with chicks. He will not be going back there until the dénouement of His saving story.'

עזרנו אלהי ישענו על-דבר כבוד שמך והצילנו וכפר על-חטאתינו למען שמך
Ozrèynu, Elohèy yish'èynu al-debhàr kebhdò shemèkha, ve-hatzilèynu ve-khappèr al-
chattotèynu le-ma'àn shemèkha.

Help us, o God of our rescue, for the sake of the glory of Your name, and deliver us and cover our failures because of Your name.

Psalm 79.9/ט"ט תהלים

A reflection on Psalm 79.9 'God's people are in a place of great need, and call upon the Lord for His deliverance, forgiveness and rescue, not for their own sake, but for the reputation of God's own name. After all, He has made great promises to them and has bound Himself to them by that name. God has to come through for His people, in the end, to defend the integrity of His own word.'

April 11 2017 Day 101 Readings Joshua 3:1-4:24, Luke 14:7-35, Psalm 80:1-19, Proverbs 12:27-28

אשר-הוביש יהוה אלהיכם את-מי הירדן מפניכם--עד-עברכם כאשר עשה יהוה אלהיכם לים-סוף אשר-הוביש מפנינו, עד-עברנו למען דעת כל-עמי הארץ את-יד יהוה כי חזקה היא--למען יראתם את-יהוה אלהיכם כל-הימים

Ashèr hobhìsh Adonài Elohèykhèm et-mèy ha-Yardèn mipnèykhèm, ad obhrehkèm ka-ashèr asàh Elohìm le-Yàm Suph, ashèr hobhìsh mipanèynu, ad obhrèynu, le-ma'àn da'àt kol ammèy ha-àretz et-yàd Adonài ki chazaqàh hee, le-ma'àn yera'tèm et-Adonài Elohèykhèm kol ha-yamìm.

For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you, until you had crossed over, just as the Lord your God did to the waters of the Sea of Reeds, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, so that all the peoples of the earth would know that the Lord's hand is powerful, and so that they may be in awe of the Lord your God in perpetuity.

Joshua 4.23,24/כד כג יהושוע ד"כ

A reflection on Joshua 4.23,24 'It is outrageous to human logic to suggest that God could hold up the waters to allow His people to cross over, but the Scriptures have Him doing so not once, but twice, and the second time, at the Jordan, leaving a cairn of stones from the middle of the river-bed as witness to it! This is so that those who saw and heard would be always in awe of this mighty God.'

ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται καὶ ὁ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται.

Òti pas o ypsòn eavtòn tapinothèesetai kai o tapinòn eavtòn ypsothèesetai.

For everyone who promotes himself will be demoted, while the one who takes the low place will be promoted.

Luke 14.11/Λουκᾶν 14.11

A reflection on Luke 14.11. ‘Modern westerners are obsessed with self-promotion. But Jesus reminds us that when we big ourselves up, there is only one way to go – down! Jesus’ way is taking the low place, so that others can recognise our gifts and bring them forward without our pushing and shoving. As Proverbs 27.2 advises, ‘let someone else praise you, don’t praise yourself – another’s words, not your own.’

April 12 2017 Day 102 Readings Joshua 5:1-7:15, Luke 15:1-32, Psalm 81:1-16, Proverbs 13:1

וַיְהִי כִּאֲמַר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-הָעָם וְשָׁבַע הַכֹּהֲנִים נְשִׂאִים שִׁבְעָה שׁוֹפְרוֹת הַיּוֹבְלִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
עָבְרוּ וַתִּקְעוּ בַשׁוֹפְרוֹת וְאָרוֹן בְּרִית יְהוָה הִלֵּךְ אַחֲרֵיהֶם

Va-yehì ke-emòr Yehòshuah el-ha-àm ve-shibh’ah ha-kohanìim nos’im shibh’ah shopheròt ha-yobhelìim liphnèy Adonài abhrù ba-shopheròt, va-aròn berìt Adonài holèkh acharèyhem. So it was that, when Joshua had spoken to the people, seven priests carrying seven loud rams-horn trumpets made their way before the Lord’s presence, blasting out on their instruments, with the box chest of God’s covenant coming behind them.

Joshua 6v8/ח"ו יהושוע

A reflection on Joshua 6.8 ‘The rams horn trumpet, or ‘shophar’ is the ceremonial instrument blown at Jewish festivals to announce the bringing in of the feast. So New Year, (Rosh HaShanàh in Hebrew) is properly called ‘the Feast of Trumpets’ or even ‘the Day of Shouting’, with loud blasts on the horn sounding through the land. Here the priests announce the coming of the Lord as they march around Jericho, preceding the box chest of God’s covenant, sign of His Kingdom presence being established on the earth. It must have been an awesome sight. We are not to hide God’s presence behind closed doors, but to carry Him with us, our very lives sounding the clear note of His rescue, bringing us joy and freedom, so that others can hear Him and respond.’

εἶπε δὲ ὁ πατὴρ πρὸς τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ· ἐξενέγκατε στολήν τὴν πρώτην καὶ ἐνδύσατε αὐτόν, καὶ δότε δακτύλιον εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑποδήματα εἰς τοὺς πόδας

Èepe dhe o patèer pros tous dhòulous avtòu, ‘Exenèngkate stolèen teen pròteen kai endhýsate avtòn, kai dhòte dhaktýlion ees teen chèera avtòu kai ypodhèmata ees tous pòdhas.’

Then the Father said to his slaves, ‘Get out the best robe and put it on him, and give him a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet.’

Luke/Λουκᾶν 15.22

A reflection on Luke 15.22 ‘The lost son is thinking in the mindset of the republic of man, where there is always payback demanded for wrongdoing, always vengeance required; he has reckoned without the compassion and covenant grace of the Father who is able to redeem and restore even from the most self-inflicted and wayward failure of his children. The Father not only receives his son home, but clothes him in the best outfit, gives him his signet with which to enact his Father’s will, and shoes, a sign of being a freeman not a slave. Such is the amazing, loving, ‘chesed’-bonded grace of God in Christ, of which the demands of the systems of man knows nothing.’

April 13 2017 Day 103 Readings Joshua 7:16-9:2, Luke 16:1-18, Psalm 82:1-8,

Proverbs 13:2-3

καὶ ἐπῆνεσεν ὁ κύριος τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας, ὅτι φρονίμως ἐποίησεν· ὅτι οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου φρονιμώτεροι ὑπὲρ τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ φωτός εἰς τὴν γενεὰν τὴν ἑαυτῶν εἰσι.

Kai epēnesen o kýrios ton oikonòmon tees adhiκias, òti phronìmos epìeesen; òti i yi-èe tou aiònos tòutou phronimòteri ypèr tous yìdus tou photòs ees teen yeneàn teen eavtòn èesi.

And the master of the unrighteous factor commended him for this, that he had acted astutely; for the children of this age are in their generation more astute than the children of light.

Luke/Λουκᾶν 16.8

A reflection on Luke 16.8 ‘The parable of the ‘cannie factor’ is notorious among interpreters as being one of the most difficult to understand. However, given that the manager has most likely been adding his own ‘commission’, inflating the debtors’ bills, (prohibited under the law of Moses, though common enough practice), by reducing the amount owed he is not only backtracking on his own sharp practice, but he is both making his master look good and sweetening the debtors so they will be nice to him when he is looking for a job shortly! It seems Jesus’ point in telling this parable is to make us look again at the use of money. Far from saying it is to be shunned and disregarded, Jesus advises us to put it to work, not for our own enrichment or to be hoarded, but in the service of the Kingdom, using it astutely to see resources put to gaining ground for the sake of His glory! Today’s Psalm perhaps helps us to see this more clearly – ‘Defend the poor and fatherless, set the cause of the downtrodden and poor to rights; deliver them and release them from the grasp of those of evil intent.’

שְׁפֹטוּ-דַל וְיִתּוֹם עֲנִי וְרֵשׁ הַצְּדִיקוּ

Shiptù dal ve-yatòm; ani va-ràsh hatsdìqoo

Give justice to the needy and the orphan; with the oppressed and the poor, deal with integrity.

Psalm 82.3/ג"ב תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 82.3 ‘There are certain people the Lord shows particular favour to. Today, we have come to know it as ‘God’s preferential option for the poor’. In dealing with them, we find we are dealing with Him. Jesus makes it clear that when we offer loving service to those who cannot repay us in kind for our help, we are doing it as a service for Him personally.’

April 14 2017 Day 104 Readings Joshua 9:3-10:43, Luke 16:19-17:10, Psalm 83:1-18,

Proverbs 13:4

וַיִּקְחוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מִצִּידָם וְאֶת-פִּי יְהוָה לֹא שָׁאֲלוּ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם יְהוָשֻׁעַ שְׁלוֹם וַיַּכְרֹת לָהֶם בְּרִית לְחַיּוֹתָם וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ לָהֶם נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה

Va-yiqechù ha-anashìm mi-tzeydìm ve-èt pi Adonài lo sha'alù, va-ya'ass la-hèm Yehòshua shalòm va-yikhròt lahèm berìt le-chayotàm va-yishàbh'u lahèm nesiyèy ha-edah.

So the men sampled their provisions, but did not ask what the Lord had to say; Joshua made peace with them and cut a covenant to let them live, the leaders of the assembly making a vow to them.

Joshua 9v14-15/טו יהושוע ט"ד

A reflection on Joshua 9.14-15 ‘Because Joshua and the leaders of Israel did not consult the Lord, they end up making a binding covenant with the Gibeonites and also getting pulled into their battle with the surrounding kings. If we go by our own logic and reason, and do not listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit we will end up compromising with all sorts of things which deflect us from God’s true heart and desire for us. Beware of Gibeonites bearing mouldy bread and wearing old shoes!’

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ποιήσητε πάντα τὰ διαταχθέντα ὑμῖν, λέγετε ὅτι δοῦλοι ἀχρεῖοί ἐσμεν, ὅτι ὁ ὠφείλομεν ποιῆσαι πεποιθήκαμεν.

Òtos kai ymèes, òtan pi-èeseete pànda ta dhiatachthènda ymìn, lèyete òti dhòuli achrèe-i-esmen, òti o ophilomen pièesai pepi-èekamen.

So you, likewise, when you have done everything you were instructed to do, you will say ‘we are still unprofitable servants, who have done only what we ought to have done.’

Luke 17.10/Λουκᾶν 17.10

A reflection on Luke 17.10 ‘Jesus is underlining in this parable of the servants who prepare their master’s food that the master will never make a profit out of them. But the good news for Jesus’ people is that they are Abba’s children, not slaves, whom He adopts through His outrageous love for us, not because we are bringing Him a return on His investment. Jesus is making the point that we can never come near earning God’s approval; all we have is from His costly, self-sacrificial grace. Even if we could do all His will, we will still be His beloved loss-leaders!’

April 15 2017 Day 105 Readings Joshua 11:1-12:24, Luke 17:11-37, Psalm 84:1-12, Proverbs 13:5-6

וַיִּקַּח יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיִּתְּנָה יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לְנַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
כְּמַחְלֻקֹתָם לְשִׁבְטֵיהֶם וְהָאָרֶץ שְׁקֵטָה מִמְּלַחְמָה

Va-yiqqàch Yehoshù’a et-kol-ha-àretz ke-khòl ashèr dibbèr Adonài el-Moshèh, va-yittenàh Yehoshù’a le-nachalàh le-Yisra’èl ke-machleqotàm le-shibhtèyhem ve-ha-àretz shaqtàh mi-milchamàh.

So Joshua took all of the land just as the Lord had said to Moses, and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel by clans and by tribes, and the land had a break from warfare.

Joshua 11v23/יְהוֹשֻׁעַ יֵאָדָּם כַּ

A reflection on Joshua 11.23 ‘It is hard for us in the twenty-first century to make sense of the warfare involved in the land of Canaan becoming Israel’s home; but what we can know is that without God’s supernatural intervention, His people should have been annihilated by the forces of the Canaanites that came against them to destroy them. It is God’s hand that is with them, not their own might, which brings them victory. It is also salutary that, in spite of all the destruction, the people of Israel still succumb to the fruitless darkness of the idols of the nations; it would take a different kind of violence, that of God nailed to a cross by His own creatures to finally break the yoke of the non-gods upon mankind, redeeming us finally through the shed blood of Jesus and His resurrection.’

οὐδὲ ἐροῦσιν ἰδοὺ ὧδε ἢ ἰδοὺ ἐκεῖ· ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν

Oudè eròusin idhòu òdhe ee idhòu ekì; idhòu ghar ee bhasilèia tou Theòu endòs ymòn estin. ‘And they won’t be saying, ‘Look, here it is!’ nor, ‘look, there it is!’, for just look, the reign of God is within you!’

Luke 17.21/Λουκᾶν 17.21

A reflection on Luke 17.21 ‘The awesome promise of the new covenant with Israel in Jeremiah 31.33 is that it will no longer be all about doing externals. The very formation of God, the Torah, will be imprinted deep into the being of all those who trust God and receive His Spirit. This is the context of Jesus’ declaration that the reign of God will not be a geographical location nor a religious structure, but the flowing from within the believers of the very life of God. Every life given to Him becomes His embassy, and through them His authority is demonstrated.’

April 16 2017 Day 106 Readings Joshua 13:1-14:15, Luke 18:1-17, Psalm 85:1-13, Proverbs 13:7-8

וַעֲתָה תְּנֶה-לִּי אֶת-הַר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיוֹם הַהוּא כִּי אָתָּה-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּיוֹם הַהוּא כִּי-
עָנְקִים שָׁם וְעָרִים גְּדוֹלוֹת בְּצִרּוֹת--אוּלַי יְהוָה אוֹתִי וְהוֹרַשְׁתִּים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה
Ve-attàh, tenàh-li et-ha-hàr ha-zèh, ashèr dibbèr Adonài bayòm ha-hù, ki attàh shamà'ta ba-
yòm ha-hù ki anakìm sham ve-arìm gedolòt be-tzuròt; ulài Adonài otì ve-horashtìm ka-ashèr
dibbèr Adonai.

(85 year old Caleb is speaking) ‘And now, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke on that day, for you heard on that day (at Kadesh-Barnea) that the giant Anakim are there in big settlements – it may well be that the Lord will be with me and I will expel them, as the Lord said.’

יהושוע יד"ב/12v14

A reflection on Joshua 14.12 ‘Caleb, who with Joshua had been one of only two spies out of ten to bring a good report of the land to Kadesh-Barnea forty five years before, now reminds the people listening that, despite there being giants in the land, God had promised then that He would be with them to rescue them. These decades later, even in his old age, Caleb wants to go and prove God’s promise, by expelling the people mightier than his, by this sealing the vision the Lord had given him so long before. That city became famous in Israel as Hebron.’

καὶ ὁ τελώνης μακρόθεν ἐστὼς οὐκ ἤθελεν οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐπάραι, ἀλλ’ ἔτυπεν εἰς τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων· ὁθεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.

Kai o telònees makròthen estòs ouk èethelen oudhè tous ophthalmòus ees ton ouranòn epàrai, all’ètypten ees to stèethos avtòu lèghon, ‘Otheòs, ilàstheeti-mi to amartolò.

And the tax-collector keeping his distance did not even want raise his eyes, but just rapped on his chest saying, ‘O God, take pity on me, a failure.’

Luke/Λουκᾶν 18.13

A reflection on Luke 18.13 ‘It is impossible to embrace someone who is blowing their own trumpet like the self-righteous Pharisee; the tax-collector, realising his brokenness, is swept up into the arms of the Father, and forgiven as he finds the low place before the Lord.’

April 17 2017 Day 107 Readings Joshua 15:1-63, Luke 18:18-43, Psalm 86:1-17 Proverbs 13:9-10

וַתֹּמֶר לִי בְרַכָּה כִּי אָרְץ הַנְּגִבַּת נָתַתְנִי וְנָתַתָּה לִּי גִלְתַּי מִיַּם וַיִּתֶּן-לָהּ אֶת גִּלְתַּי עֲלִיּוֹת
וְאֶת גִּלְתַּי תַּחְתִּיּוֹת

Va-tòmer, ‘Tenàh li bherakhàh, ki èretz ha-negèbh netatàni, ve-natatah li gullòt màyim.’ Va-yitten lah et gullòt aliyòt ve-et gullòt tachtiyòt.

And she (Achsah, daughter of Caleb) said, ‘Give mé a blessing, for you have given me a dry south-land; so grant me water-springs.’ So he gave her both the upper springs and the lower springs.

יהושוע טו"ט/19v15

A reflection on Joshua 15.19 ‘Achsah, Caleb’s daughter, is given as wife to the victor Othniel, Caleb’s nephew, as a reward for helping Caleb conquer the city of Kiryat-Sepher. She then seeks a blessing from her father as well; since the land she has been given is in the south, and therefore very arid, she asks for the rights over the water in the land as well. She is bold in asking, for at that time women were not regarded as having rights in the land. But her loving father grants her request, giving her all the springs in the territory. Her forthrightness pays off, and she receives her father’s blessing; so may we be bold with our Father to ask for the springing up of His Spirit in our lives to change the atmosphere of the dry land where we are.’

ιδὼν δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς περίλυπον γενόμενον εἶπε· πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Idhòn dhe avtòn o Ieesòus perilypon genòmenon èpe, ‘Pos dhyskòlos i ta chrèemata èchondes eeselèvsondai ees teen bhasilèian tou Theòu.’

Seeing how sad he had become, Jesus said, ‘How difficult it is for those having riches to come into the reign of God.’

Luke 18.24/Λουκᾶν 18.24

A reflection on Luke 18.24 ‘So often, we do not have wealth, it has us. Jesus’ words about the rich young ruler indicate that he was under another regime, the rule of materialism. It was hard for him to come under the reign of God, not because God hates wealth, but because wealth was this man’s king. The only way to be free of its control is to foreswear its tyranny over us and abandon ourselves fully to God as our one true Provision.’

April 18 2017 Day 108 Readings Joshua 16:1-18:28, Luke 19:1-27, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 13:11

וַיִּקְהָלוּ כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁלֹּה וַיֵּשְׁכִינוּ שָׁם אֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהָאָרֶץ נִכְבְּשָׁה לְפָנֵיהֶם
Va-yiqqahalù kol-adàt benèy-Yisra’èl Shilòh va-yashkìnu sham et-ohèl mo’èd ve-ha-àretz nikhbeshàh liphnèyhem.

Assembling the whole company of the sons of Israel at Shiloh, they installed there the tent of gathering, as the land had been made subject to them.

Joshua 18v1/יהושוע יח"א

A reflection on Joshua 18.1 ‘For generations in Israel there was no permanent structure of worship in the land. The tented meeting place God had shown them to make in the desert was pitched at Shiloh in the hill country of Israel and there the priests served the Lord. In fact, no stone structure was ever required by the Lord. He does not live in buildings, but in lives. (Acts 17.24) The Lord is essentially mobile, and not contained in our structures, either physical or institutional. He is the God of no fixed abode.’

εἶπε δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι σήμερον σωτηρία τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο, καθότι καὶ αὐτὸς υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν· ἦλθε γὰρ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλὸς

Èpe dhe pros avtòn o Isòus òti sèmeron soteeria to ìko tòuto eyèneto, kathòti kai avtòs yiòs Abhraàm èstin; èelthe gar o Yiòs tou anthròpou zeetèesai kai sòsai to apolòlòs

Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has materialised in this house, seeing that he is also a son of Abraham; for the Son of man has come to look for and rescue the life going to waste.'

Luke/Λουκᾶν 19.9,10

A reflection on Luke 19.9-10 ‘Zacchaeus is locally reviled, and of short stature to boot. Wanting to see Jesus pass by, but too short to see over the crowd, and too ashamed to push forward, he climbs a sycamore-fig tree, and watches the Messiah approach. At the tree, Jesus addresses him directly and calls him down to host Him for the night, where Zacchaeus is so touched by Jesus’ acceptance and love to a sinner like him, that he repents, turns from his greed and agrees to make reparation for any damage done to people in the city, four times over. Jesus has again reached out to the marginalised and rejected in this little man.’

וְשָׂרִים כְּחֻלְלִים כָּל-מַעֲיָנֵי בָרָךְ

Ve-sharim ke-cholelim, ‘Kol ma’yanà bakh.’
Both singer and musicians say, ‘All my sources are in You!’
תהילים פז"ז/87.7 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 87.7 ‘When it comes to inspiration for music and song, the Lord God is an inexhaustible resource. Here the Singer has been celebrating the place where God meets man, for him the hill of Zion in Jerusalem. It is, in his reckoning, the place that brings the nations together, where the native air is praise. Whether we are physically near or far from Zion, the Spirit of the One who loves it more than anything causes its music to ripple through our being!’

April 19 2017 Day 109 Readings Joshua 19:1-20:9, Luke 19:28-48, Psalm 88:1-18, Proverbs 13:12-14

דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר תִּנּוּ לָכֶם אֶת-עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה
Dabbèr el-benèy Yisra’èl leymòr, ‘Tenù lakhèm et-arèy hamiqlàt, ashèr dibbàrti aleykhèm be-yàd Moshèh.’

(The Lord speaks to Joshua:) Say to the children of Israel, ‘Appoint for yourselves the cities of asylum, about which I spoke to you through Moses.’

יהושוע כ"ב/ב/20 Joshua

A reflection on Joshua 20.2 ‘In the very constitution of His people, the Torah, God had instructed through Moses for six cities to be designated for asylum-seekers who had committed manslaughter. (See Number 35.6ff.) This was because when someone was killed, an avenger of blood would pursue the killer to carry out retribution; when the death was accidental or unintended, God provides a shelter from vengeance. The six cities are now named, and are located throughout the territory of Israel, so that there is access to one from any part of the land. God provides, then, for asylum for the unjustly pursued – it is in His heart of visceral compassion to make a place of safety for those in danger.’

λέγοντες· Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος βασιλεὺς ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου· εἰρήνη ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις.

Lèghondes, ‘Evloyeemènos o erchòmenos bhasilèvs en onòmati Kyriou; eerèenee en ouranò kai dhòxa en ypsistis.’

Saying, ‘Blessed is the King who is welcome in the name of the Lord; let there be peace in heaven and glory at the highest level!’

Luke/Λουκᾶν 19.38

A reflection on Luke 19.38 ‘The words the crowd are shouting are the traditional Jewish welcome, ‘Barukh ha-Ba!’ ‘Blessed is the coming!’ but they are welcoming here the King who comes not just in His own name, but in the name of the Lord Himself. The words are echoes of Psalm 118.26, and in the verse previous there, verse 25, the Singer has called ‘Hosanna’, ‘Rescue us.’ The people are acclaiming Jesus as the Chosen, the one prophetically promised from of old, who will deliver them, and they will not be silenced at His coming. ‘

April 20 2017 Day 110 Readings Joshua 21:1-22:20, Luke 20:1-26, Psalm 89:1-13, Proverbs 13:15-16

לֹא-נִפְלָדָבָר--מִכָּל הַדְּבָר הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַכֹּל בָּא

Lo naphàl dabhàr mi-kòl ha-dabhàr ha-tòv ashèr dibbèr Adonài el-bèyt Yisraèl; ha-kòl ba
Not one thing failed of all the good things which the LORD had promised to the house of
Israel; everything came about

יהושוע כא"מג/21v43

A reflection on Joshua 21.43 ‘ ‘Not one thing failed of all the good things God had promised to the house of Israel.’ What a testimony to the durability of God’s covenant, that, even though Israel is not faithful to Him, He is faithful to Himself, for He cannot be untrue to His promise.’

δείξατέ μοι δηνάριον· τίνος ἔχει εἰκόνα καὶ ἐπιγραφήν; ἀποκριθέντες δὲ εἶπον· Καίσαρος. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοῖς· ἀπόδοτε τοίνυν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ.

‘Dhìxatè-mi dheenàrion; tinos èchee icòna kai epigraphèen?’ Apokrithèndes dhe, èpon
‘Kàisaros.’ O dhe èpen pros avtis, ‘Apòdhotè tinyn ta Kàisaros Kàisari kai ta tou Theòu to
Theò.’

(Jesus is speaking in answer to the religious leaders) ‘Show me a denarius; whose is the image and inscription on it?’ In aswering, they said, ‘Caesar’s.’ ‘So, give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.’ Luke/Λουκᾶν 20.24,25

A reflection on Luke 20.24,25 ‘By His very question, Jesus unmaskes the hypocrisy of His questioners. They are in the Temple, where Roman coinage is supposed to be exchanged in favour of Temple currency (hence the money-changers’ tables.) But someone has a denarius in his pocket! The question therefore designed to trap Jesus turns back on the religious leaders, as in His divine wisdom, He marks out the clear boundaries of duty to Caesar versus obedience to God. We cannot give the state what is due the Lord, and it may not ask that of us.’

April 21 2017 Day 111 Readings Joshua 22:21-23:16, Luke 20:27-47, Psalm 89:14-37, Proverbs 13:17-19

כִּי אִם-בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם תִּדְבְּקוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

Ki im b’Adonài Elohèykhèm tidbaqu ka-ashèr asitem ad ha-yòm ha-zèh.

Rather, stick fast to the Lord your God, as you have done up until today.

יהושוע כג"ח/23v8

A reflection on Joshua 23.8 ‘Joshua, now aged and at the end of his ministry to God’s people exhorts them to be faithful to the Lord God who has brought them out of slavery and established in the land He promised. The word he uses has the sense of adhering, cleaving, glueing ; it is the same word used of a woman and man being woven into one another in matrimony and their offspring in Genesis 2. Joshua looks to the fusion of God and His people, a fusion which we are today experiencing as God comes and lives in and through our lives.’

ὅτι δὲ ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροὶ, καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἐμήνυσεν ἐπὶ τῆς βάλτου, ὡς λέγει Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν Ἀβραὰμ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν Ἰσαὰκ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν Ἰακώβ.

Θεὸς δὲ οὐκ ἔστι νεκρῶν, ἀλλὰ ζώντων· πάντες γὰρ αὐτῷ ζῶσιν.

Ὅτι dhe eyèerondai i nekri, kai Moysès emènysen epi tees bhàtou, os lèyi Kýrion ton Theòn Abhraàm kai ton Theòn Isaàk kai ton Theòn Iakòbh. Theòs dhe ouk èsti nekròn, allà zòndon; pàndes ghar avtò zòsin.

So that there is resurrection of the dead even Moses indicates at the bush, because he speaks of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. But He is not God of the dead, but of the living; because for Him, everyone is alive.

Luke 20.37,38/Λουκᾶν 20.37,38

A reflection on Luke.20.37,38. ‘In a masterstroke of Biblical interpretation here, Jesus confounds the Sadducees (Tzadduqim) , who deny the resurrection because they say it is not found in the books of Moses, the ‘Torah’; Jesus demonstrates that by speaking to God as the God of the Patriarchs, Moses recognised that in God they still live, for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living! Here is a clear sign to us of the promise of eternal life for any who put their trust in God through the Messiah Jesus. We are never counted out of the ‘bundle of the living’!

April 22 2017 Day 112 Readings Joshua 24:1-33, Luke 21:1-28, Psalm 89:38-52, Proverbs 13:20-23

וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעָם אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נַעֲבֹד וּבְקוּלוֹ נִשְׁמָע
וַיִּכְרַת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּרִית לָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּשְׁמַע לוֹ חָק וּמִשְׁפָּט בְּשֵׁכֶם

Va-yomerù ha-àm el Yehòshua, ‘et-Adonài Elohèynu na’abhòd, u-bheqolò nishmà.

Va-yikhròt Yehòshua berit la-àm ba-yòm ha-hù, va-yasèm lo choq u-mishpat bi-Schèkhem.

And the people said to Joshua, ‘We will serve the Lord our God and listen to His voice.’

So Joshua enacted a covenant for the people that day, and set in place for them at Shechem its statutes and principles.

Joshua 24v24,25/יהושוע כד"כ כה

A reflection on Joshua 24.24,25 ‘As his life draws to a close, Joshua rehearses to Israel at Shechem the whole story of their call and heritage from Abraham onward. He then calls on them to choose whom they will worship, and with one voice, they declare for the Lord, their God; to seal this declaration, Joshua enacts the ancient sign of irrevocable commitment for the nation in a covenant, literally ‘cut’ in the flesh of a sacrifice. This is no replacement covenant for the others that went before, but a renewing and embedding of all earlier ones, with the obligation of it recorded in statute and principle (the Hebrew word here is ‘mishpat’ – a setting right, putting in order) and witnessed to by a memorial stone.’

πάντες γὰρ οὗτοι ἐκ τοῦ περισσεύοντος αὐτοῖς ἔβαλον εἰς τὰ δῶρα τοῦ Θεοῦ, αὕτη δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ὑστερήματος αὐτῆς ἅπαντα τὸν βίον ὃν εἶχεν ἔβαλε.

Pàndes gar òuti ek tou perissèvondos avtìs èbhalon ees ta dhòra tou Thèou, avtèe dhe ek tou ysterèmatos avtèes àpanda ton bhìon on èechen èbhale.

For they all contributed out of their surplus to God’s offering-box, but she, even in her deficit, put in all she had left to live on.

Luke 21.4/Λουκᾶν 21.4

A reflection on Luke 21.4 ‘Most of us would not consider giving until we had enough to give. The widow Jesus points out to His disciples gives all she has, even though she does not have enough. God’s economics are not man’s. Man accumulates to feel secure; God’s way is to give away in order to receive blessing. For the follower of Jesus, generosity is not an option, it is a necessity.’

April 23 2017 Day 113 Readings Judges 1:1-2:9, Luke 21:29-22:13, Psalm 90:1-91:16, Proverbs 13:24-25

וְאַתֶּם לֹא-תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית לְיוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת--מִזְבְּחוֹתֵיהֶם תִּתְצֹוּן וְלֹא-שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלִי
מֵהַזֹּאת עָשִׂיתֶם

Ve-atèm lo tikhretù le-yoshebhèy ha-àretz ha-zòt mizbechotèyhem titotzùn ve-lò shema’tèm
be-qolì; ma zot asitem?

(An Angel is speaking to Israel) ‘And you were to enact no covenant with the inhabitants of this land, rather you were to knock down their altars; but you have not listened to my voice. What have you done?’

Judges 2.2/ב"ב שופטים

A reflection on Judges 2.2 ‘God is finding out the pain of having a people who are half-hearted in their walk with Him. The story of the book of Judges is a story of compromise and pollution of the relationship of the people of God, their Rescuer and Deliverer; this is also parabolic of the unfaithfulness of all mankind toward their Maker. But the book is also about God’s intention to rescue His people from their brokenness; the ‘Shophtim’, the ‘Judges’, far from being those who sit on thrones dishing out punishment, are those who, in the Hebrew concept of them, are intervening to restore ‘mishpat’ – equity, the right order, relationship, pushing back chaos, restoring the people to God; they are, then, the forerunners of Messiah, who will Himself be the one great ‘Shophet-Judge,’ through His cross and resurrection setting the world free from the outcomes of its failure.’

Ἦλθε δὲ ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν ἀζύμων, ἐν ἧ ἔδει θύεσθαι τὸ πάσχα,
καὶ ἀπέστειλε Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην εἰπὼν· πορευθέντες ἐτοιμάσατε ἡμῖν τὸ
πάσχα ἵνα φάγωμεν.

Èlthe dhe ee eemèra ton azýmon, en ee èdhee thýesathai to pàscha, kai apèsteele Pètron kai
Ioànnèen eepòn, ‘Porèvthendes etimàsate eemìn to pàscha ina phàgomen.

So the day came for unleavened, (yeast-free) bread, on which the Passover lamb was to be slaughtered and He (Jesus) commissioned Peter and John, saying ‘Go and get things ready for us for Pesach (Passover) so we can eat.’”

Luke 22.7,8/Λουκᾶν 22.7,8

A reflection on Luke 22.7,8. ‘God’s timing is perfect; Jesus knows that this is the moment the corrupt authorities will covertly move against him, for He is the Lamb of God, and so much of Israel’s story of deliverance is wrapped up in the unfolding of ‘Pesach’. This is the designated moment for His sacrifice, on the feast of the blood of the lamb on the lintel. There is, however, a traditional preparation to be done of the room where they are to eat; a search must be made, and all yeast and fermented products must be taken and burned, so that the passover may be holy. Yeast in this case is a symbol of impurity, and Peter and John go and make sure this Passover with Jesus will be, in keeping with the time-honoured traditions, a sacred meal.’

April 24 2017 Day 114 Readings Judges 2:10-3:31, Luke 22:14-34, Psalm 92:1-93:5, Proverbs 14:1-2

וְגַם כָּל-הַדּוֹר הָהוּא נֶאֱסָפוּ אֶל-אֲבוֹתָיו וַיָּקָם דּוֹר אַחֵר אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּ אֶת-יְהוָה
וְגַם אֶת-הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל

Ve-gàm kol-ha-dòr ha-hù ne'esphù el-avotàyv, va-yaqàm dor acharèyhem ashèr lo-yad'ù et-Adonài ve-gàm et-ha-ma'asèh ashèr asàh le-Yisraèl.

And so that whole generation joined their forefathers in death, and another generation arose after them who had no relationship with the LORD and were ignorant of His intervention on behalf of Israel

Judges 2v10/י"ב שופטים

A reflection on Judges 2.10 ' Just after the beginning of the First World War, Valentin Bulgakov, last private secretary to Count Leo Tolstoy, wrote an appeal to his brother Russians. 'Our enemies are - not the Germans, and - not Russians or Frenchmen. The common enemy of us all, no matter what nationality to which we belong - is the beast within us. Nowhere is this truth so clearly confirmed, as now, when, intoxicated, and excessively proud of their false science, their foreign culture and their civilization of the machine, people of the 20th century have suddenly realized the true stage of its development: this step is no higher than that which our ancestors were at in the days of Attila and Genghis Khan. It is infinitely sad to know that two thousand years of Christianity have passed almost without a trace upon the people.' Today's Scripture shows us that this intentional amnesia, writing God out of the equation, predates even the coming of Jesus.'

καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασε καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.
ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον.

Kai labhòn àrton evcharistèesas èklase kai èdoken avtis lègon, 'Toutò-esti to somà mou to ypèr ymòn didòmenon: touto pièete ees teen emèen anàmneesin.' Osàvtos kai to potèerion metà to deepnèesai lègon, 'tòuto to potèerion ee kainèe diathèekee en to àimatì-mou, to upèr ymòn enchynòmenon.'

And taking bread, having given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you: do this as a record of me.' Similarly, after supper he took the cup saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'

Luke/Λουκᾶν 22.19-20

A reflection on Luke 22.19-20 'In the Passover supper, there are many traditional elements, one of which is the breaking of the middle one of three wafers of unleavened bread held in a special pouch on the table. They seem to symbolise the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The middle wafer is taken and broken, then shared between the diners; it is this wafer, the afikoman that Jesus takes and declares is His body given for them, the wafer which represents the spared son, Isaac, becomes the slain Son, Jesus.'

טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת לַיהוָה וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְחָה עֲלִיּוֹן לְהַגִּיד בַּבֶּקֶר חֲסִדָּךְ וְאֶמוּנָתְךָ בְּלֵילוֹת
Tobh le-hodòt le'Adonài, u-le-zamèr le-shimkhà, Elyòn; le-hagìd ba-bòqer chasdèkha ve-emunatkhà ba-leylòt.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to make music to the Most High; to declare His covenant-grace in the morning and His faithfulness in the night.

Psalm 92.1,2/ג"ב תהלים

A reflection on Psalm 92.1,2 ‘Celebration is integral to relationship with the Lord; expression and music overflow from hearts in awe of our amazing Maker and Rescuer; each day, the grace covenanted to us, sustaining our lives leads to us into singing, and even at night, we whisper in amazement of His constancy towards us!’

April 25 2017 Day 115 Reading Judges 4:1-5:31, Luke 22:35-53, Psalm 94:1-23, Proverbs 14:3-4

ותאמר ה'לך אלך עמך אפס כי לא תהיה תפארתך על-הדרך אשר אתה הולך כי ביד-
אשה ימכר יהוה את-סיסרא ותקם דבורה ותלך עם-ברק קדשה
Va-tòmer ‘Ha-lòkh elèykh immàkh; èphes ki lo tihyèh tiphàrtekha al-ha-dèrekh ashèr attàh holèykh, ki be-yàd ishàh yimkòr Adonài et-Siserà’; va-taqàm Debhoràh im-Baràq, Qèdshah. Then she (Deborah) said, ‘ I most certainly am going with you; however, this road you are taking will not lead to making you look wonderful, for the LORD is going to deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman’; and Deborah set off with Baraq for Qedesh.

שופטים ד"יט/19v4

A reflection on Judges 4.19 ‘Deborah, the great prophetess and judge of Israel, has no interest in Baraq’s male ego being polished. As if to emphasise the partnership between the sexes, she reveals that he is not going to get the acclaim for the victory God is going to bring about. That will go to the woman Jael, who overcomes the enemy decisively. It is interesting how men so often need recognition, while women tend to get on with the job at hand, regardless of the praise it might bring them.’

λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἔτι τοῦτο τὸ γεγραμμένον δεῖ τελεσθῆναι ἐν ἐμοί, τὸ καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων εὐλογίσθαι· καὶ γὰρ τὸ περὶ ἐμοῦ τέλος ἔχει.

Lègo gar ymìn òti èti tòuto to yegrammènon dheè telesthèenai en emì, to kai metà anòmon eloyisthee; kai gar to perì emòu tèlos èchee.

(Jesus speaks to His disciples) ‘For I tell you, that this scripture has to be fulfilled in me; ‘and he was counted among the lawless’, for this destiny too finds its completion in me.’

Luke/Λουκᾶν 22.37

A reflection on Luke 22.37 ‘On the brink of His arrest by the authorities, led to Him by Judas Iscariot, Jesus is completely conscious of how events are unfolding. He sees the ancient words of prophets coalescing to find their fulfilment in Him on this auspicious day; this is why He came. Even as Isaiah had foreseen, Jesus will be judged and executed as a criminal; the Lamb of God will also be the scapegoat for all the brokenness and injustice of mankind throughout history.’

April 26 2017 Day 116 Readings Judges 6:1-40, Luke 22:54-23:12, Psalm 95:1-96:13, Proverbs 14:5-6

וַיֵּרָא גִדְעוֹן כִּי-מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה הוּא וַיֹּאמֶר גִּדְעוֹן אָהָה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה כִּי-עַל-כֵּן רָאִיתִי מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה
פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנִים וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יְהוָה שְׁלוֹם לָךְ אֶל-תִּירָא לֹא תָמוּת.
Va-yàr Gide’òn ki mal’àkh Adonài hu, va-yòmer Gide’òn, ‘Ahà, Adonài Adonài, ki ra’iti mal’àkh Adonài panim el panim.’ Va-yòmer lo Adonài, ‘Shalòm lekha, al-tir’à, lo tamùt.’ When Gideon realised that he was the Angel of the LORD, Gideon said, ‘Oh no, LORD, LORD, for I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face!’, but the LORD said to Him, ‘Peace to you, don’t panic, you won’t die.’

שופטים ו"כב/22, 23v6

A reflection on Judges 6.22 ‘It is so often the case that people expect to die when they have looked on the face of God in the Old Testament. Perhaps the awesome power of the encounter with the Living God’s appearance causes people to be so overwhelmed that they feel that life will end suddenly. Yet God does not always hide His face from us; with Jacob, with Moses, and here with Gideon, he comes close up, almost cheek to cheek with them. The meeting may be terrifying, but God always tells us not to fear. And in Jesus, we see God in human flesh, and realise that through Him we are looking into His Father’s eyes.’

ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἔσται ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καθήμενος ἐκ δεξιῶν τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Apò tou nyn èstai o Yiòs tou anthròpou kathèmenos ek dhexiòn tees dhynàmeos tou Theòu
From now on, the Son of man (as a human being) will be seated at the right hand of the power of God

Luke/Λουκᾶν 22.69

A reflection on Luke 22.69 ‘At first light, the council reconvenes to deliver their judgement to Jesus, and He is brought before them again. They ask Jesus to reiterate His claim to be Messiah. Jesus rebukes their lack of faith in Him, but confirms He is, and that He is destined to sit at the right hand of the Father, a human being taking His place close up to the being of God. On the basis of this claim, they sentence him to die.’

בְּאוֹ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעַה נִבְרַכְהָ לִפְנֵי-יְהוָה עַשְׂנוּ

Bo’ù, nishtachavèh ve-nikhra’ah, nibhrehkhàh liphnèy Adonài osèynu.

Come, let’s go flat out and bow down, let’s kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Psalm 95.6/תהילים צה"ו

A reflection on Psalm 95.6 ‘Our western concept of worship, of a word-based, rational address to God can look very different at times to the original Hebrew model; here the Singer exhorts his audience to go flat out, facedown, bowing and kneeling before the Lord who has made us. When we engage with God, it is more than our minds and voices involved – there is a physicality we can express which equates to loving the Lord ‘with all our strength’.

April 27 2017 Day 117 Readings Judges 7:1-8:17, Luke 23:13-43, Psalm 97:1-98:9, Proverbs 14:7-8

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-גִּדְעוֹן רַב הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתָּךְ מִתַּתִּי אֶת-מִדְיָן בְּיָדָם פֶּן-יִתְפָּאֵר עָלַי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יָדִי הוֹשִׁיעָה לִּי

Va-yòmer Adonài el Gide’òn, ‘Rabh ha-àm ashèr ittàkh mititti et-Midyàn, pen yitpa’èr alày Yisra’èl leymòr, ‘yadi hoshiah li.’

And the Lord said to Gideon, ‘There are too many people with you for Me to give you the Midianites, otherwise Israel will big themselves up and say, ‘Our own hands rescued us!’

Judges 7v2/שופטים ז"ב

A reflection on Judges 7.2 ‘God knows Israel so well! He is prepared to stack the odds totally against them so they have to rely on His power to deliver them from Midian, otherwise they will big themselves up and claim they were their own deliverers! Proud mankind constantly seeks to upstage God, but when He steps in and does what man cannot, man has only one response; God is awesome, and there is no one else like Him!’

καὶ ὅτε ἀπῆλθον ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Κρανίον, ἐκεῖ ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς κακούργους, ὃν μὲν ἐκ δεξιῶν ὃν δὲ ἐξ ἀριστερῶν.

Kai òte apèlthon epì ton tòpon ton kalòumenon Kranìon, ekèe estàvrosan avton kai tous kakòurgous, on men ek dhexiòn on dhe ex aristeròn.

And when they reached the place called ‘Cranium’ (Golgotha, the Skull), there they crucified him along with the criminals, one on the right, and one on the left.

Luke 23.33/Λουκᾶν 23.33

A reflection on Luke 23.33 ‘The very name of the place where they executed Jesus and the criminals, in Greek ‘the Cranium’, in Aramaic ‘Golgotha’, the Skull, conveys already a place of horror and pain. This would not have been a place specially picked out to mark Jesus’ last agony; this would be the ‘hanging place’, drenched with blood and death, where many benighted souls had met their end, and many more would follow. In our sanitised age, we find it hard to imagine the everyday nature of crucifixion. The sheer humdrum of the Roman soldiers’ task, another judicial punishment, another set of bodies to be taken down when they were fully gone, adds to the depth of our disgust at Jesus’ treatment. Yet, as the Good Friday hymn tells us ‘we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there.’

April 28 2017 Day 118 Readings Judges 8:18-9:21, Luke 23:44-24:12, Psalm 99:1-9, Proverbs 14:9-10

וַיֹּמֶר אֲלֵהֶם גִּדְעוּן לֹא-אֶמְשֹׁל אֲנִי בָכֶם וְלֹא-יִמְשֹׁל בְּנִי בָכֶם יְהוָה יִמְשֹׁל בָּכֶם

Va-yòmer alèyhem Gide’òn ‘lo emshòl anì bakhèm ve-lò yimshòl benì bakhèm Adonài yimshòl bakhèm.’

And Gideon said to them ‘I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD will rule over you.’

Judges 8v23/שׁוֹפְטִים ח"כ"ג/8v23

A reflection on Judges 8.23 ‘Issues of power and control are always driving forces in the affairs of men. But Gideon reveals his true depth of character when he refuses the offer of a crown, knowing that there is only One who is the true King of Israel, the Lord God Himself. Gideon’s son betrays his father’s wisdom, and ends up in tragedy by pushing himself forward. Jesus points us to the towel and the basin as the source of true leadership, not to the orb and sceptre.’

ἐμφοβῶν δὲ γενομένων αὐτῶν καὶ κλινουσῶν τὸ πρόσωπον εἰς τὴν γῆν εἶπον πρὸς αὐτάς· τί ζητεῖτε τὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν;

Emphòbhon dhe yenomènon avtòn kai klinousòn to pròsopon ees teen yeen, èpon pros avtàs, ‘Ti zeetèete ton zònda metà ton nekròn?’

Then, terrified, they fell facedown on the ground as they (the two angels) said to them, ‘Why are you looking for the living among the dead?’

Luke /Λουκᾶν 24.5

A reflection on Luke 24.5 ‘One thing that is so striking about Luke’s narrative of the resurrection of Jesus is the humanity it portrays. The women have come to soothe their grief by smearing oils and perfumes on the newly-buried corpse, and maybe sit awhile and weep. They arrive to find a scene of devastation – the grave desecrated, the body gone. Then, strange men in luminous clothing speaking to them, maybe the grave robbers caught in the act? They are terrified, and collapse in fear on the ground; their reaction is understandable. They are asked the strangest question; ‘Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive?’ – it might seem to mock their grief, but soon they realise and are up and running to tell the incredulous men of the cataclysmic event of which they have been told.’

April 29 2017 Day 119 Readings Judges 9:22-10:18, Luke 24:13-53, Psalm 100:1-5, Proverbs 14:11-12

וַיִּסְרוּ אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי הַנִּזְכָּר מִקִּרְבָּם וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעַמְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
Va-yasiru et-elohèy ha-nekhàr mi-qirbàm, va-ya'abhdù et-Adonài va-tiqtzàr naphshò ba-amàl Yisra'èl

And they (Israel) put a stop to the foreign gods among them, and they served the LORD, and He was grieved in His being about the misery of Israel.

Judges 10v16/זו"ט י"ו שופטים

A reflection on Judges 10.16 'It's surprising sometimes how God is portrayed by the writers of the Old Testament. Here, God is described as being 'grieved in his being' or 'cut to the soul' by Israel's plight, as they act to put the Lord back in the centre of their national life and to reject the non-gods of the pagans. His people have an effect on God's heart which provokes His compassion and covenant obligation, always reaching towards us.'

Εἶπε δὲ αὐτοῖς· οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι οὓς ἐλάλησα πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔτι ὄντων σὺν ὑμῖν, ὅτι δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς περὶ ἐμοῦ.

Èepe dhe avtis, 'Oùti ee lòyi ous elàleesa pros ymàs èti on syn ymìn, òti dhee pleerothèenai pànda ta yegrammèna en to nòmo Moysèos kai tis prophètais kai psalmis perì emòu.'

Then he said to them, 'These are the same things I was saying to you when I was with you, that everything had to be fulfilled that was written in the Torah of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms about me.'

Luke 24.44/Λουκᾶν 24.44

A reflection on Luke 24.44 'Jesus, in His resurrection body, reminds His friends in the upper room that He has taught them from all three sections of the Scriptures; Torah, Nebhi'im (Prophets) and Ketubhim (Writings), the latter of which contain the Psalms. Jesus had no New Testament to draw on. His life, death and resurrection are the culmination to which the whole story of Israel points in what we call the Old Testament – perhaps better, Volume One of God's story with His people! The Messianic Jewish believer, Alfred Edersheim, writing in His classic, 'The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah', asserts of Him that 'He has made the sublimer teaching of the Old Testament the common possession of the world, and founded a great brotherhood, of which the God of Israel is the Father....Springing from such a people; born, living, and dying in circumstances and using means, the most unlikely of such results – yet, by universal consent, the Man of Nazareth has been the mightiest Factor in our world's history: alike, politically, socially, intellectually and morally... If He be not the Messiah, the world has not, and never can have, a Messiah.' (Vol.1, book 2, chapter 6)

כִּי-טוֹב יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ וְעַד-דֹּר וָדֹר אֱמוּנָתוֹ

Ki -tobh Adonài, le'olàm chasdò, ve-ad dor va-dor, emunato

For good is the LORD, unlimited His covenant-bonded grace, and from generation to generation, His faithfulness

Psalm 100v5/ה"ה ק"ה תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 100.5 'The covenant-bonded grace of God, His 'hesed', is the constant theme and refrain of Israel. In the depth of His being, God is good, and utterly dependable. His covenant declaration to Abraham obligates Him to His people, and this is their song throughout their history and ours: 'The Lord is good, and His covenant grace and faithfulness endure to all generations. ''

יֵשׁ דְרָךְ יֵשׁר לְפָנֵי-אֵישׁ וְאַחֲרֵיתָהּ דְרָכֵי-מָוֶת

Yesh dèrèkh yashàr liphnèy ish ve-acharitàh darkhèy màvet
There is a way that looks straight to man, but it finishes in a dead-end.
Proverbs 14.12/משלי יד"ב

A reflection on Proverbs 14.12 ‘The sad fact is that as humans we can be so blind to our own fallibility that we act as though we were our own ultimate authority. When we reckon without the wisdom of God, even though we think it is all very straightforward and logical, enough to count God out of the equation, He makes it clear that without Him it finishes in a very final and literal dead-end.’

April 30 2017 Day 120 Readings Judges 11:1-12:15, John 1:1-28, Psalm 101:1-8, Proverbs 14:13-14

וַיֹּמְרוּ לוֹ אֶמְרָנָא שִׁבְבֹלֶת וַיֹּמְרוּ אֶמְרָנָא שִׁבְבֹלֶת וְלֹא יָכִין לְדַבֵּר כֶּן וַיֹּמְרוּ אוֹתוֹ וַיִּשְׁחָטוּהוּ אָל-
מַעְבְּרוֹת הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּפְּל בְּעֵת הַהִיא מֵאֶפְרַיִם אַרְבַּעִים וּשְׁנַיִם אָלֶף
Va-yomrù lo, ‘Emòr-na ‘Shibbolet’, va-yòmer ‘Sibbolet’, ve-lò yakhìn le-dabbèr ken; va-yochazù otò va-yish-chatùhu el-ma’beròt ha-Yardèn, va-yippòl be-èt ha-hì mé-Ephrà’im arba’im u-shnàyim àleph.

And (the Gileadites) would say to him, ‘ Say ‘Shibbolet’ (a corn-ear)’ and he would say, ‘Sibbolet’, because he could not pronounce it right; so they then siezed him and killed him at the Jordan fords, and in that way fell forty two thousand Ephraimites.

Judges 12.6/שפטים יב"ו

A reflection on Judges 12.6 ‘As Israel’s story darkens, it descends into civil war. The tribe of Ephraim threatens Jephthah’s Gileadites, and they in turn wreak a horrible slaughter on their brother Israelites at the Jordan Ford. These stories are not morally defensible, but portray the people of God who have slipped into a deep ravine of decadence and internal prejudice. When they are no longer in awe of the Lord, they do awful things to one another.’

ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο

Òti o nòmos dhià Moysèos edhòthee, ee chàris kai ee alètheia dhià Ieesòu Christòu eyèneto

כִּי הַתּוֹרָה נְתוּנָה בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה וְחֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת מִמְּקוֹר יְשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ יֵצְאוּ
Ki ha-Tòrah netunàh be-yàd Moshèh ve-chèsed ve-èmet mimeqòr Yeshùà ha-Mashìach yatza’ù

For the life-rule of Torah was given through Moses, but covenant-bonded grace (CHESD) and faithful truth (EMET) materialised through Jesus Christ.

John/Ἰωάννην 1.17

A reflection on John 1.17 ‘When John speaks a few verses earlier in John 1.14 of Jesus Christ as being *full of grace and truth*, he is echoing the words of the Lord God in revealing His very essence to Moses in Ex.34.6 (Heb *rabh chesed ve-emet*) This Jesus is the Lord in human form, beyond any doubt for John; while *Torah*, the rule of life comes through Moses, the man, through Christ comes *grace and truth – chesed ve’emet*, the very attributes of God Himself.’

May 1 2017 Day 121 Readings Judges 13:1-14:20, John 1:29-51, Psalm 102:1-28, Proverbs 14:15-16

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה לָמָּה זֶה תִּשְׁאַל לִשְׁמִי--וְהוֹאֵף-לֵא

Va-yomèr lo mal'akh Adonài, 'Lamah zeh tish'al lishmi? Ve-hù phel'i.'

And the Angel of the LORD said to him (Manoah), 'Why do you ask my name? It is Wonderful.'

Judges 13v18/ח"י"ג שופטים

A reflection on Judges 13.18 'Manoah, the father of mighty Samson, (in Hebrew, 'Shimshon', Sunshine) the right-wiser of Israel, encounters the angel of the Lord face to face. He is terrified that having seen the face of God, he will die, but his wife chides him, 'Why would God reveal all these amazing things if He were going to just kill you?' The man asks the divine messenger's name, and is given just a pointer to the wonder that it signifies. It is this same word which Isaiah the prophet will later use to designate the Son who will be born as a sign, who, among other titles, will carry the name 'Pèle' - 'Wonderful' (Isa.9.6) He does, indeed, fill us with wonder.'

καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν· ἐφ' ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ Πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον καὶ μένον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ.

Kagò ouk èedheen avtòn, all'ò pèmpsas mé bhaptizin en ýdhati, ekinòs mi èepen, 'Eph'òn an idhees to Pnèvma katabhàinon kai mènnon ep'avtòn, outòs-estin o bhaptizon en Pnèvmati Ayìo.'

And I did not know Him, but the One who sent me to immerse in water, He said to me, 'The One on whom you see the Spirit coming down and staying on Him, He is the Immerser in the Holy Spirit.'

John/Ιωάννην 1.33

A reflection on John 1.33 'All four gospel-writers include John the Baptist proclaiming Jesus as the One who immerses us in the Holy Spirit. As John has taken people down into the Jordan and plunged them into the water, so Jesus takes His people and plunges them into Him who is the life-giving River of God, carrying, empowering and designating them as His appointed envoys. We are, then, to live our whole lives in that River, in this new dimension of God's presence daily flooding our lives.'

May 2 2017 Day 122 Readings Judges 15:1-16:31, John 2:1-25, Psalm 103:1-22 Proverbs 14:17-19

καὶ τοῖς τὰς περιστερὰς πωλοῦσιν εἶπεν· ἄρατε ταῦτα ἐντεῦθεν· μὴ ποιεῖτε τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου οἶκον ἐμπορίου.

Kai tis tas peristeràs polòusin èepen, 'Árate tàvta endènthen; mee pièete ton èekon tou patròs mou èekon emporiou.'

And to the dove-sellers he said, 'Get this stuff out of here! Don't turn my Father's house into a market-place!'

John/Ιωάννην 2.16

A reflection on John 2.16 'Perhaps Jesus is so harsh with the dove-sellers because doves are the offerings brought by the poor who cannot afford the lambs and bulls to sacrifice. This exploitation by those who are just out to make money, adding a premium to the sale because of their captive audience, angers Jesus to the point of force. Money is such a driver in a market-based society, that we have to watch that in making sure people are paid fairly for their service we do not manipulate those least able to pay, especially where that might exclude them from connecting with the Father who has provided freely for their salvation through His Son.'

כְּרַחֵם אָב עַל-בָּנִים רַחֵם יְהוָה עַל-יִרְאָיו

Ke-rachèm Abh al-banìm, richèm Adonài al-yere'av

As compassionate as a Father to children, so compassionate is the LORD to those in awe of Him

תהילים קג"ג/13 Psalm 103v13

A reflection on Psalm 103.13 'The word compassion in Hebrew is connected to the word for the intestines, and , in women, the womb. When we read that the Lord has compassion on us, it is something visceral, something deep in His being that is going on towards us. It is not mere sympathy nor yet empathy, but a 'suffering with', which is the meaning of com-*passion* if we break it down. In Jesus, we find the perfect expression of this compassion lived out in our very midst.'

May 3 2017 Day 123 Readings Judges 17:1-18:31, John 3:1-21, Psalm 104:1-24, Proverbs 14:20-21

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיִּשְׂרָר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה

Ba-yamìm ha-hèm eyn mèlekh be-Yisra'el, ish ha-yashàr be-eynàv ya'asèh

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what they thought fit in their own eyes
שופטים יז"ו/17 Judges 17v6

A reflection on Judges 17.6 'In a society where there is no true magnetic north to the moral compass, no overarching authority to which appeal is made, self-opinion and popular whim blow people in every direction of the winds of chance. It is astounding that Israel, with her heritage of miracle and wonder, should have raced so fast to the bottom of the barrel in terms of her here chasing after non-gods of human manufacture. The refrain will mark the rest of the sorry book of Judges; 'there was no king in those days, and everyone did as they saw fit.'

οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

Oùto gar eegàpeesen o Theòs ton kòsmon, òste ton yìon avtòu ton monoyenèe èdhoken, ìna pas o pistèvon ees avtòn mee apòleetai, all' èchee zo-èn ayònion.

For God loved the world so much, that He gave the only Son He sired, so that anyone entrusting themselves to Him should not be destroyed, but should have life unlimited.

John/Ιωαννην 3.16

A reflection on John 3.16 'Nicodemus is non-plussed, but Jesus makes clear that He is referring to acceptance of Himself as the Messiah, and as the One come to deliver and set mankind free from the power of death, to demonstrate God's love for His creatures in the most quoted verse of Scripture, John 3.16. He refers to Himself as the light, but says that men hate light, preferring darkness – perhaps a reference to the fact that Nicodemus has not come in daylight but under cover of night.'

מַה-רַבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה-- כָּלֵם בְּחֹכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנֶיךָ

Mah rabbù ma'asèykha, Adonài; kullàm be-chokhmàh asità, mal'àh ha-àretz qinyanèkha!

What a lot you have made, O Lord; and you have made them all in wisdom, filling the earth with Your treasures!

תהילים קד"כ/24 Psalm 104v24

A reflection on Psalm 104.24 ‘The Singer has been marvelling at the intricacy of the creation round him; at the trees, the birds, the lions and man at his labour, and now bursts out in an expression of amazement at the sheer exuberance of all the Lord has made; God has been totally over-the-top with His workmanship, all of it demonstrating the depth of His wisdom and skill.’

**May 4 2017 Day 124 Readings Judges 19:1-20:48, John 3:22-4:3, Psalm 104:24-35
Proverbs 14:22-23**

וַיִּשְׁלַח שְׁבֻטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנָשִׁים בְּכָל-שְׁבֻטֵי בְנֵימִן לֵאמֹר מָה הַרְעָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר נִהְיִיתָ בְּכֶם

Va-yishlechù shìbhtey Yisra’èl anashìm be-khòl shìbhtey Bhinyamin, leymòr, ‘Mah ha-ra’ah ha-zòt ashèr nihyehàh bakhèm?’

And the tribes of Israel sent men to all the clans of Benjamin, saying, ‘What is this terrible thing that has happened among you?’

Judges 20v12/ב"ב/שופטים

A reflection on Judges 20.12 ‘Judges 19 and 20 contain a narrative of unspeakable degradation and violence which reflect the nadir of Israel’s departure from the covenant God has established with them. Disorder, sexual violence, civil war and the wiping out of almost a whole tribe from their midst are the outcome of a sordid story, and lead us to wonder, as the Israelites did, ‘How could this evil have happened among you?’ We cannot judge them; day by day evil still goes on in our midst which is equal to that they endured among them.’

ὄν γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς, τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ Θεοῦ λαλεῖ· οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα.

On gar apèsteelen o Theòs, ta rhèmata tou Theòu lalèe; ou gar ek mètrou didosin o Theos to Pnèvma.

(John the Baptist says of Jesus) ‘The One God sent is speaking the words of God; for God has not put a limit on the Spirit He is giving to Him.’

John 3.34/Ἰωάννην 3.34

A reflection on John 3.34 ‘John the Baptist states that when Jesus is speaking, He speaks the words of God. John uses here not the word ‘logoi’, (the big picture) but the ‘rhèmata’ – the creative, now-words of God. And Jesus can do this, John says, because God is giving Him constantly the Holy Spirit without limit. There is an insight here into the amazing relationship in the Trinity – the Father releasing the full energy of the Holy Spirit to the Son to enact God’s will in the earth. And Jesus entrusts to us His Name in which to continue His work by the Spirit.’

**May 5 2017 Day 125 Reading Judges 21:1-Ruth 1:22, John 4:4-42, Psalm 105:1-15,
Proverbs 14:25**

וְרֵאִיתֶם וְהִנֵּה אִם-יֵצְאוּ בָנוֹת-שִׁילוֹ לְחֹל בְּמַחְלוֹת וַיִּצְאֶתְם מִן-הַכְּרָמִים וְהִטְפֹּתֶם לָכֶם אִשׁ אֲשֶׁתוֹ מִבְּנוֹת שִׁילוֹ וְהִלַּכְתֶּם אַרְץ בְּנֵימִן

U-re’itèm ve-hinnèh im yetze’ù bhenòt Shilò la-chùl bamcholòt vi-tza’tèm min ha-keramìm va-chatphetèm lakhèm ish ishtò mi-b’nòt Shilo va-halakhtèm èretz Binyamin.

(The Elders of Israel to the survivors of Benjamin)

So watch and see when the girls of Shiloh come out to dance their dances, then rush out from the vineyards and each one grab himself a woman of Shiloh and get away to the land of Benjamin

Judges 21v21/כ"א/שופטים

A reflection on Judges 21.21 ‘The book of Judges ends with events of such depravity and bloodshed, that it is hard to reconcile that this is the same people whom the Lord had rescued from slavery and made His own. In scenes reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah, the men of Gibeah commit terrible gang-rape on a young woman, leaving her dead. The fury this provokes in the rest of Israel leads to the virtual annihilation of the whole tribe of Benjamin. In remorse, it is agreed that the Benjamites may kidnap for themselves wives from Israel. The catalogue of horrific degradation warns us of the darkness of man’s heart, and of his need for a rescuer. The book closes with the refrain, ‘There was no king in Israel, and everyone did as he saw fit.’

τῆ τε γυναικὶ ἔλεγον ὅτι οὐκέτι διὰ τὴν σὴν λαλιὰν πιστεύομεν· αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκηκόαμεν, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, ὁ Χριστός.

Tee dhe yinaiki èleghon òti oukèti dhià teen seen laliàn pistèvomen; avtì gar akeekòamen, kai ìdhamen òti òutòs estin aleethòs o sotèer tou kòsmou, o Christòs.

They said to the woman, ‘We have not come to faith because of your words; for we ourselves have seen and know that this is truly the rescuer of the world, the Messiah.

John /Ιωάννην 4.42

A reflection on John 4.42 ‘We cannot know Jesus without a personal encounter with His reality. The words and reports of others will not substitute for the life-transforming touch of His presence. The Samaritans here have heard the woman’s reports of the prophet who told her all that she had done, but now they have seen and experienced themselves the living grace of His person, and entrust themselves to His unique ability as the anointed Messiah of God to rescue them and bring them into relationship with God the Father, whom they can now worship in Spirit and in truth.’

דַּרְשׁוּ יְהוָה וְעִזּוּ בַּקְשׁוּ פְנֵי תַמִּיד

Dirshù Adonài ve-uzò, baqshù phanàyv tamìd

Pursue the Lord and His strength, always yearning for His presence-face.

Psalms 105:4/ד"ה קה"ד תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 105.4 ‘Two words in Hebrew in this verse emphasise the quest of the worshipper in search of the Lord. The first is ‘dirshu’, which has the sense of pursuit, going after something with intent to take hold of it. The English word ‘seek’ can have a connotation of looking for something without necessarily finding it; the word here infers aim and target. The second word is ‘baqshu’, which conveys desire. It is in the heart of the modern Hebrew word for ‘please’ when asking for something wanted. To pursue and to desire with longing the presence-face of God is the first call on a believer’s life, one which the Lord Jesus delights to fulfil!’

**May 6 2017 Day 126 Readings Ruth 2:1-4:22, John 4:43-54, Psalm 105:16-36,
Proverbs 14:26-27**

וַיֹּמֶר מִי-אַתָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי רוּת אֲמַתְךָ וּפְרָשְׁתָּ כְנָפֶיךָ עַל-אֲמַתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אֶתְּהָ וַיֹּאמֶר
בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה לַיהוָה בְּתִי הֵיטִבַּת חֶסֶדְךָ הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן-הָרִאשׁוֹן לְבִלְתִּי-לָקֶת אַחֲרֵי הַבְּחוּרִים
אִם-דָּל וְאִם-עָשִׁיר

Va-yomèr, 'Mi at?' va-tomèr, 'Anokhì Rut, amatèkha; u-pharàshta khenaphèkha al-amatèkha ki go'èl atàh.' Vayòmer, 'Barukhàh at l'Adonài, bittì, heytabht chasidèkh ha-acharòn min ha-rishòn le-bhiltì lèkhet acharèy ha-bachurìm im dal ve-im ashìr.'

And he (Boaz) said, 'Who are you?' And she replied, 'I am Ruth, at your service; spread your cloak over your servant, for you are my kinsman-redeemer.' And he said, 'You are blessed of the Lord, my daughter, doing even more good latterly by your covenant-bonded grace than you did at first, not going after the young lads, whether poor or rich.'

Ruth 3v9,10/ רות ג"ט א' 3v9,10

A reflection on Ruth 3.9,10 'The story of Ruth is one of the most heartwarming and engaging of the whole Bible. Here, her mother-in-law, Naomi has sent Ruth into a very vulnerable situation, where an unscrupulous man might have taken advantage of her. Yet Boaz responds to her tender heart, and protects her honour, promising to rescue her from her poverty and need. Like Jesus to us, he is her redeemer, her 'go'el'; he will transform her future through their kinship. He acknowledges the covenant-bonded grace which Ruth has shown to Naomi, not chasing after the lads, but staying faithful to her mother-in-law's care. Now blessed by the Lord, joined together in marriage, Ruth and Boaz will go on to become human ancestors of King David, and through him, of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐμαρτύρησεν ὅτι προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι τιμῆν οὐκ ἔχει.

Avtòs gar o Yeesòs emartýreesen òti prophètees en tee idhìa patrìdhi timèen ouk èchee. For Jesus Himself said from experience that a prophet does not receive honour in His own homeland.

John /Ἰωάννην 4.42

A reflection on John 4.42 'It is all too easy to lose the value of the servant of God through over-familiarity with them in the day to day. Jesus Himself said this from experience in Nazareth, that people took Him for granted and missed the treasure in the field, so that He had to move to Capernaum in order to be away from the stereotyping and patronising of His neighbours in Galilee. May we be asking always for eyes to see through the familiar so that we find in each other the nuggets of God's gold which He has placed in each one of us, planted in the field of the humdrum.'

**May 7 2017 Day 127 Readings 1 Samuel 1:1-2:21, John 5:1-23, Psalm 105:37-45,
Proverbs 14:28-29**

אֵין-קְדוֹשׁ כִּיהוָה כִּי אֵין בְּלִתֵּךְ וְאֵין צוּר כְּאֵלֵינוּ
Eyn qadòsh k'Adonài, ki eyn biltèkha, ve-èyn tzur k'Elohèynu

(Hannah's song of thanks for her son Samuel)

There is none as holy as the LORD, for there is no one other than You, nor is there any rock of security like our God

1 Samuel 2v2/ב"ב א' 2v2/ שמואל א ב"ב

A reflection on 1 Samuel 2v2 ‘In a sense, Samuel is the last of the judges, bringing to a close the era of tribalism in Israel. He is a gift-child of God to Hannah, and the prayer of thanks she brings to the Lord for answering her prayer is full of gratefulness to the God who can turn around the darkest situations. There is no rock like our God, indeed. ’

διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυε τὸ σάββατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε τὸν Θεόν, ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ Θεῷ.

Dhià tòuto oun màllon ezèetoun avtòn ee Ioudhài-ee apoktèenai, òti ou mònon èlye sàbhaton, allà kai patèra ìdhion èleye ton Theòn, ìson eavtòn piòn to Theò.

So after this the Jewish authorities sought all the more to kill Him, for not only was He relaxing the Sabbath, but also He said God was His own father, making Himself equal with God.

John/Ἰωαννῆν 5.18

A reflection on John 5.18 ‘Even though Jesus is healing, because it is the Sabbath the religious leaders come after him. Jesus protests that His Father doesn’t stop working, and Jesus is only doing what He sees His Father doing. This makes the Jewish leaders want to kill Him all the more. Jesus goes on to make a fantastic claim for Himself to be the One who will call the dead to life at the great resurrection. Just as the Father’s nature is life, so the Son’s nature is life also, and this life is imparted to those who know the Son.’

פֶּתַח צוּר וַיִּזְבְּחוּ מַיִם הֶלְכוּ בְּצִיּוֹת נָהָר

Patàch tzur va-yazùbhu mayìm, halkhù ba-tziyòt nàhar.

He opened the rock and water gushed out, flowing over the dry ground as a river.

Psalm 105v41/קה"מ"א תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 105.41 ‘Man cannot survive without water, particularly in the arid desert. The Singer celebrates the Lord’s magnificent provision of water for His people in the desert, enough for over a million people, by His own intervention. In Jesus, our Rock is opened up for us and living water still pours out in a life-giving river, where we can drink, bathe and swim daily.’

May 8 2017 Day 130 Readings 1 Samuel 2:22-4:22, John 5:24-47, Psalm 106:1-12, Proverbs 14:30-31

וַיָּבֹא יְהוָה וַיִּתְיַצֵּב וַיִּקְרָא כְּפֶעֱם-בְּפֶעֱם שְׁמוּאֵל שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל דַּבֵּר כִּי שָׁמַע עַבְדְּךָ
Va-yabhò Adonài va-yityatzàbh va-yiqqràh khe-pha’àm be-pha’àm, ‘Shmu’èl, Shmu’èl’;va-
yòmer, ‘Dabbèr ki shomè’a abhdèkha.’

And the Lord came and presented Himself, calling as He had previously, ‘Samuel, Samuel’;and he said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’

1 Samuel 3v10/שמואל א ג"א

A reflection on 1 Samuel 3.10 ‘In the Hebrew of the story of the child Samuel’s first encounter with the Lord, Eli the priest instructs Samuel to reply to the Lord with a simple, active response – ‘dabbèr, ki shomèa abhdèkha’, ‘Speak for your servant is listening.’ The word ‘listen’ here is not just a one-off hearing, but a continuing attentiveness, which is ready even when there is no sound of a voice. We need, like Samuel, to be ready to quieten our own noise and open our receivers, our ears, to pick up even the whispers of His word that might come at the most unexpected times.’

εἰ γὰρ ἐπιστεύετε Μωϋσεῖ, ἐπιστεύετε ἂν ἐμοί· περὶ γὰρ ἐμοῦ ἐκεῖνος ἔγραψεν.
εἰ δὲ τοῖς ἐκείνου γράμμασιν οὐ πιστεύετε, πῶς τοῖς ἐμοῖς ῥήμασι πιστεύσετε;
Ee gar epistēvete Moysēe, epistēvete an emi; peri gar emou ekinos ègrapsen. Ee dhe tis
ekēnou grāmmasin ou pistēvete, pos tis emis rhēmasi pistēvete?

(Jesus says) ‘For if you had believed Moses, then you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But if you don’t believe his writings, how then will you believe my words?’

John 5.46,47/Ἰωάννην 5.46,47

A reflection on John 5.46,47. ‘Jesus asserts that His coming was prophesied by Moses, way back in Israel’s story. Moses spoke in Deuteronomy 18.18-19 of a Prophet who was coming who would be of Moses’ stature, whose words God would require to be heard. It is perhaps significant here that the word John uses to refer to Jesus’ sayings, ‘rheema’, is the same word the Greek version of the Old Testament has Moses use to express the expressions of the Prophet who is to come. The rabbis and teachers are missing the life-words of Jesus because they are not discerning Him in the signposts of the Scriptures.’

May 9 2017 Day 129 Readings 1 Samuel 5:1-7:17, John 6:1-21, Psalm 106:13-31, Proverbs 14:32-33

וַיִּקְחוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶת-אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיָּבֹאוּ אֹתוֹ בֵּית דָּגוֹן וַיִּצִיגוּ אֹתוֹ אֶצֶל דָּגוֹן וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ
אֲשֶׁדוּדִים מִמַּחֲרַת וְהִנֵּה דָגוֹן נָפַל לְפָנָיו אַרְצָה לְפָנֵי אָרוֹן יְהוָה וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-דָּגוֹן וַיִּשְׁבּוּ אֹתוֹ
לְמִקְוָמוֹ

Va-yiqechù Phlishtim et-aròn ha-Elohìm, va-yabhò’u otò beyt Dagòn, va-yatzìgu otò èytzel
Dagòn va-yashkìmu mi-macheràt ve-hinèh, Dagòn nophèl le’phanàv artzàh liphnèy aròn
Adonài va-yiqechù et-Dagòn va-yosbhù otò li-mqomò

And the Philistines took God’s covenant-chest and brought it into the temple of Dagon and placed it beside the idol. The folk of Ashdod got up next morning, and, look! - the idol of Dagon was flat on its face on the ground before God’s chest and they had to take Dagon and set him upright back into place

First Samuel 5v2,3/ג"ב א ה"ב שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 5v2,3 ‘When non-gods mess with the only true God, fireworks ensue. The Philistines get more than they bargain for when they capture the box-chest of God’s covenant and put it as a trophy beside their great fish-idol, Dagon. No rival can stand before the Maker of Heaven and Earth – so it falls down, defeated! ’

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל-כָּל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִם-בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם אַתֶּם שׁוֹבִים אֶל-יְהוָה הַסִּירוּ
אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי הַנֶּכֶר מִתּוֹכְכֶם וְהַעֲשִׂיתֶם וְהִכִּינוּ לְבַבְכֶם אֶל-יְהוָה וְעַבְדֶּהוּ לְבָדוּ וַיִּצַּל אֶתְכֶם
מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים

Va-yòmer Shmu’èl el kol beyt Yisra’èl leymòr, ‘Im bekhòl lebhahkhèm atèm shabhìm el
Adonài, hasiru et elohèy ha-neykhàr mitokhekhèm, ve-ha-ashtaròt ve-hakhìnu lebhahkhèm
el Adonài ve-ibhdùhu lehadò ve-yatzèl etkhèm mi-yàd Pelishtim.

And Samuel spoke to the whole house of Israel and said, ‘If with all your hearts you come back to the Lord, rejecting the alien gods you have among you and the totems of the idol Astarte, fixing your hearts on the Lord and serving Him, then He will rescue you from the clutches of the Philistines.’

First Samuel 7v3/ג"ז א שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 7.3 ‘The prophetic right-wiser Samuel has seen the terrible end of the priestly dynasty of Eli and his sons, and the capture of the focal box-chest of God’s covenant by the Philistines, now returned to Israel, but not to its rightful place in the tent of worship. Samuel now speaks, offering reconciliation from the Lord for Israel, if they will wholeheartedly immerse themselves back into the covenant life of their Maker, and ditch the non-gods who are of no consequence. In a world full of competing rivals for our affection and adoration, only in the covenant-bonded grace of the Lord our Maker and Rescuer will we find the salvation we long for.’

בְּלֵב נְבוֹן תִּנּוּחַ חֲכָמָה וּבִקְרֹב כְּסִילִים תִּוָּדַע

Be-lèbh nabhòn tanùach chokhmàh, u-bhe-qèrebh kesilim tivvadèa.

Wisdom is at rest in the heart of discretion, but fools advertise what’s inside them.

Proverbs 14.33/משלי יד"לג

A reflection on Proverbs 14.33 ‘Wisdom is at rest in the heart of discretion, but fools advertise what’s inside them’; Solomon here is reminding us that wisdom is at home with discretion and humility, while those who lack it can’t help making known the superficiality in their hearts. The fact is, wisdom can be learned when we put God first, and stay taking Him seriously instead of pushing ourselves and our opinions forward.’

May 10 2017 Day 130 Readings 1 Samuel 8:1-9:27, John 6:22-42, Psalm 106:32-48, Proverbs 14:34-35

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-שְׁמוּאֵל שְׁמַע בְּקוֹל הָעָם לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ כִּי לֹא אֶתְּךָ מֵאֲסוּ כִּי-
אֶתִּי מֵאֲסוּ מִמֶּלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם

Va-yòmer Adonài el-Shmu’èl , ’Shemà be-qòl ha-àm le-khòl ashèr yomerù elèkha, ki lo otkhà ma’asù ki otì ma’asù mimlòkh alèyhem.’

And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Listen to the voice of the people and all they are saying to you, for it’s not you they are despising, rather it’s me they are refusing to have reigning over them.’

שמואל א ח"ז/8v7

A reflection on 1 Samuel 8v7 ‘The refusal of Israel to receive the Lord as her true king is painful for Samuel to receive. He knows the fickleness of human rulers, and their hunger for power which oppresses subjects, and knows that in their clamour for a king, Israel is just wanting to be like the idol-worshipping nations around them. But God is not about to let go of them, even in their rejection of His rule. He will continue true and faithful to His covenant, moving toward the coming of His own Kingship in Jesus Christ in the ages ahead and the redemption of Israel and all things in Him. ’

εἶπε δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς· ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ πεινάσῃ, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ διψήσῃ πώποτε.

Èepe dhe avtis o Yeesòus, ‘Egò-eemi o àrtos tees zoèes; o erchòmenos pros emè ou mee peenàsee, kai o pistèvon ees emè ou dhipsèesi pòpote.’

Then Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; the one who comes to me will not hunger, and the one entrusting themselves to me will never thirst.’

John/Ἰωαννην 6.35

A reflection on John 6.35 ‘Because we are essentially persons, we need a person to satisfy our essential need. Impersonal, material supplies and abstract experiences will only ever meet physical and perhaps psychological needs. The person of Jesus Christ, however, promises to satisfy at a level beyond that of material food and drink, even beyond that which human relationship can ever do. He is the bread and water of life; by His Spirit, He is the unlimited resource which promises to meet our deepest level of hunger, that of our heart, our inner core.’

May 11 2017 Day 133 Readings 1 Samuel 10:1-11:15, John 6:43-71, Psalm 107:1-43, Proverbs 15:1-3

וְצַלְחָהּ עָלֶיךָ רוּחַ יְהוָה וְהִתְנַבֵּיתָ עִמָּם וְנִהְפַכְתָּ לְאִישׁ אֲחֵר׃

Ve-tzalchàh alèkha Rùach Adonài, ve-hitnabìta immàm, ve-nehpàkhta le-ìsh achèr.

(Samuel is speaking to Saul)

And the Spirit of the Lord will break over you, and you will prophesy with them, and be transformed into another man.

First Samuel 10v6/ו"ו א שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 10.6 ‘Just as with the Rescuer-Judges before him, Saul is immersed into the personal dimension of God’s presence by His Spirit, pouring through him in ecstatic expression, transforming him for the royal purpose of God he is called to. For the follower of Jesus living this side of the tsunami of the Spirit that is Pentecost, this is the common experience, prophesied by Joel, that all are promised and may receive, the breaking over us of the wave of God Himself.’

ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς· ἐάν τις φάγη ἐκ τούτου τοῦ ἄρτου, ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. καὶ ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω, ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστίν, ἣν ἐγὼ δώσω ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς.

Egò-eemi o àrtos o zon o ek tou ouranòu katabàs; èàn tis phàyee ek tòutou tou àrtou, zèesetai ees ton ayòna. Kai o àrtos dhe on egò dhòso, ee sarx mòu-estin, een egò dhòso ypèr tees tou kòsmou zoèes.

I am the living bread that has come down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread, they will live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6.51/Ἰωάννην 6.51

A reflection on John 6.51 ‘Jesus’ words in John 6 are some of the hardest to grasp; some even say, ‘He is speaking in riddles’ (v.60). The context is Jesus’ recent feeding of the people by the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, satisfying thousands, who are now following Him to get more. But Jesus is pointing them away from just food, to the reality of His sacrifice which is to come, by which He will rescue the world; this is far more important for their eternal health than food. As they have received from His hands the broken bread to eat, so they need to receive His promise of unending life through His bloody death on the cross. For those who remain with Him when others turn away from His hard truth, they will break through to immeasurable joy and peace in the age to come, when they share in the life of the Living Bread in the gift of resurrection.’

May 12 2017 Day 132 Readings 1 Samuel 12:1-13:23, John 7:1-30, Psalm 108:1-13, Proverbs 15:4

וַאֲמַר עֲתָה יֵרְדוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֵלַי הַגִּלְגָּל וּפְנֵי יְהוָה לֹא חִלִּיתִי וְאֶתְאַפֵּק וְאֶעֱלֶה הָעֵלָה
Va-omàr attàh yerdù Phelishtim elày ha-Gilgàl u-phnèy Adonài lo chilitì va-et'apàq va-a'alèh ha-olàh.

(Saul is speaking to Samuel in excuses)

‘So I said to myself, ‘the Philistines are coming down against me at Gilgal, and I have not consulted the face of the Lord’, so I took it upon myself to make a sacrifice.’

First Samuel 13v12/ב"ב יג"א שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 13.12 ‘In the first occurrence in the Scripture of a king usurping the role of the priest, Saul, tired of waiting for Samuel to arrive has taken it upon himself to make a sacrifice by fire to the Lord. When Samuel arrives, Saul makes the lame excuse that he was worried about the Philistines attacking them before they had consulted the Lord; Samuel does not accept the reasoning, and pronounces that because of this the kingship will be removed from Saul’s lineage and given to another. Ever since, when the state seeks to replace the servants of God for its own interests’ sake, the outcome is always grievous to God, because it usurps His Lordship.’

ἔκραζεν οὖν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ διδάσκων ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ λέγων· καμὲ οἴδατε, καὶ οἴδατε πόθεν εἰμί· καὶ ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ οὐκ ἐλήλυθα, ἀλλ’ ἔστιν ἀληθινὸς ὁ πέμψας με, ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε· ἐγὼ οἶδα αὐτόν, ὅτι παρ’ αὐτοῦ εἰμι κάκεινός με ἀπέστειλεν.
Èkraxen oun en to ierò dhidhàskon o Ieesòs kai lèghon, ‘Kamè idhate, kai idhate pòthen eemi; kai ap’emavtòu ouk elèelytha, all’èstin aleethinòs o pèmpsas me, on ymèes ouk idhate. Eghò idha avtòn, òti par avtòu-eemi kakinòs me apèsteelen.

Teaching in the Temple, Jesus shouted and said, ‘You know both who I am and where I am from; and I haven’t come on my own account, but the one who sent me is true, whom you are ignorant of. But I know Him, since I am from Him and He is the one who commissioned me. John 7.28,29/’Ιωάννην 7.28,29

A reflection on John 7.28,29 ‘The Feast of Tabernacles, the Jewish harvest festival, is a celebration connected with intense expectation of the Messiah. (See Zech.14.16ff.) This is perhaps why earlier in the chapter Jesus’ brothers urge Him to reveal Himself in Jerusalem at this moment, a call which Jesus resists. However, here, Jesus boldly stands up in the Temple and announces that He has been sent by God, knowing that the authorities are seeking to arrest Him for His claims. But it will be Passover, not Tabernacles which sees His saving act of redemption.’

May 13 2017 Day 133 Readings 1 Samuel 14:1-52, John 7:31-53, Psalm 109:1-31. Proverbs 15:5-7

וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹנָתָן עֲכָר אָבִי אֶת-הָאָרֶץ רָאוּ-נָא כִּי-אָרוּ עֵינַי כִּי טַעַמְתִּי מֵעַט דְּבַשׁ הַזֶּה
Va-yòmer Yonatan, ‘Akhàr abhì et-ha-àretz, re’ù-na ki orù eynài ki ta’àmti me’at debhàsh ha-zèh’

And Jonathan said, ‘My father has oppressed the land; look how my eyes have brightened since I tasted a little of this honey!’

First Samuel 14v29/כ"ט יד"א שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 14.29 ‘Saul’s reign as king is not a worthy one; he is presumptuous and self-opinionated, and his lack of consultation in this matter of war nearly leads to the death of his own son. Only the appeal of Saul’s disgruntled army saves Jonathan from his father’s vanity. This story is a reflection on the way of powerful men to overreach themselves, without a strong anchor in God. David will be, unlike Saul, a man after God’s own heart.’

Ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς εἰστήκει ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔκραξε λέγων· ἐάν τις διψᾷ, ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος.

En dhe tee eschàtee eemèra tee megàlee tees eortèes, eestèeki o Yeesòus kai èkraxe lègon, ‘Èàn tis dhipsà, erchèstho pros me kai pinèto. O pistèvon ees emè, kathòs èepen ee graphèe, potamì ek tees kilias avtòu rèvousin ýdhatos zòndos.’

On the great, final day of the festival (of Tabernacles), Jesus stood up and shouted out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink. Anyone who believes in me, just as the Scripture says, ‘out of their depths will flow rivers of living water.’

John 7.37, 38/Ἰωάννην 7.37,38

A reflection on John 7.37,38. ‘In his great commentary, ‘The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah’, (vol.2, book IV, ch.VII) the Messianic Jewish writer, Alfred Edersheim describes the moment Jesus makes this stunning assertion. It is the culmination of seven days of celebrations of God’s goodness to His people in providing for them in the desert after the Exodus, during which people build and live in ‘sukkot’, (booths or tabernacles). On this last day, the High Priest pours out at the Temple altar a pitcher full of almost a gallon of water drawn from the Pool of Siloam, as a sign of the provision of water in the wilderness. Jesus now ties together what has gone before with what is to come; at this moment He announces Himself as the Source, the Immerser in the Holy Spirit, whose glorious ascension will trigger the outpouring of the living presence of God on all who put their trust in Him.’

כִּי-עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן אָנֹכִי וְלִבִּי חָלַל בְּקִרְבִּי

Ki àni ve-ebhyòn anòkhi, ve-libbì chalàl be-qirbì

For I am oppressed and poor, and my heart is trashed inside me.

Psalm 109.22/תהילים קט"ב

A reflection on Psalm 109.22 ‘The Singer here is caught in a maelstrom of hatred and desire for vengeance against his enemy and oppressor, crying out to God to do terrible things to him and his family. Yet here in this verse, the real reason for his pain comes out – he is broken and needy, and his heart is battered and bruised by loss. For the believer in Jesus, forgiveness of our enemies releases us from the painful hooks of vengefulness and allows us to rebuild and find healing. It is counter-intuitive, but Jesus gives us the power not just to forgive those who sin against us, but to walk away from the cycle of failure and harm we otherwise would be held in.’

May 14 2017 Day 134 Readings 1 Samuel 15:1-16:23, John 8:1-20, Psalm 110:1-7, Proverbs 15:8-10

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל הֲחָפֵץ לַיהוָה בְּעֹלוֹת וּמִזְבְּחִים כְּשֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה הֲנֵה שְׂמֵעַ מִזְבַּח טוֹב לַהֲקָשִׁיב מִחֶלֶב אֵילִים

Va-yomèr Shmu'èl, 'Ha-chèyphetz l'Adonài be-olòt u-zebhachìm ki-shemòda be-qòl Adonài? Hinèh, shemòda mi-zèbhach tobh le-haqshìbh me-chèylebh eylìm.'

And Samuel said, 'Does the LORD take pleasure in offerings and sacrifices as much as listening to the voice of the LORD? Look, doing what you hear God tell you is better than sacrifice, and paying attention is better than the fat of rams.'

First Samuel 15v22/כב"ט א ל א שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 15.22 'Saul's presumption in keeping the spoils of war for himself leads to his losing the throne. The Lord makes it clear here that we cannot string God along as a cover for our sins, assuming that He will just turn a blind eye to our waywardness. God's way involves surrender to His will, and surrender and our comfort do not sit easily together. Now Samuel will seek out the successor to Saul, who will be a man after God's own heart, in spite of his human fallibility.'

Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησε λέγων· ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσῃ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς.

Pàlin oun avtis o Yeesòs elàleese lègon, 'Egò-eemi to phos tou kòsmou; o akolouthòn emì ou mee peripatèsee en tee skotìa, all èxee to phos tees zoèes.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'

John/Ἰωάννην 8.12

A reflection on John 8.12. 'Jesus is teaching here in the Temple on the eighth day after the beginning of Tabernacles. On this day, with all the booths and tents taken down, the people gathered to witness the lighting of great lampstands, or 'menorot' in the Temple courts, which illuminated the area around. They symbolised the light of Israel shining out to the nations from the Temple. At this point, Jesus declares Himself to be, not only the 'menorah', the lamp, but the light itself, which will go out into the nations of the world and reveal His Father's saving love.'

נְאֻם יְהוָה לְאֹדֹנָי שֵׁב לְיָמֵינִי עַד-אֲשִׁית אִיבֹיךָ הַדָּם לְרַגְלֶיךָ

Ne'ùm Adonài l'adonì, 'Sheyv liminì, ad asit oyebhèkha hadòm le-raglèkha.'

The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'

Psalm 110.1/א"א תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 110.1 'Jesus teaches from this verse of Psalm 110 in Mark 12.36, expressing the mystery of the Messiah's being both descended from David and his Lord. Week by week, believers in Jesus express in the creed their faith in this One who is seated at the right hand of the Father. He is now both God and man, in the courts of heaven, pouring out the promised Holy Spirit, and will one day return for His bride.'

May 15 2017 Day 135 Readings 1 Samuel 17:1-18:4, John 8:21-30, Psalm 111:1-10, Proverbs 15:11

וַיֹּמֶר דָּוִד יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּילָנִי מִיַּד הַיָּרֵךְ וּמִיַּד הַדָּב הוּא יִצִּילָנִי מִיַּד הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי הַזֶּה וַיֹּמֶר שָׁאוּל אֶל-דָּוִד לָךְ יְהוָה יִהְיֶה עִמָּךְ

Va-yòmer David, ‘Adonài ashèr hitzilàni mi-yàd ha-arì u-mi-yàd ha-dòbh, Hu yatzilèyni mi-yàd ha-Pelishtì ha-zèh.’ Va-yòmer Sha’ùl el-David, ‘Leykh, v’Adonài yihyeh immàkh.’

And David said, ‘The LORD who rescued me from the claw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the LORD be with you.’

First Samuel 17v37/ל"ז א' שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 17.37 ‘David has a perfect and balanced confidence, but not in his own ability. He knows that his life is under the protection of his Maker, and therefore ,to quote Bunyan’s hymn, ‘No lion can him fright; he’ll with a giant fight..’ They are all the same risk, faced in full recognition that the battle is the Lord’s to win, not David’s.’

καὶ ὁ πέμψας με μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστίν· οὐκ ἀφῆκέ με μόνον ὁ πατήρ, ὅτι ἐγὼ τὰ ἀρεστὰ αὐτῷ ποιῶ πάντοτε.

Kai o pèmpsas me met emòu-estin; ouk aphèkè-me mònnon o patèer, òti egò ta arestà avtò piò pàndote.

(Jesus is speaking) ‘And He who sent me is with me; the Father has not left me to go solo, for I always do the things which He favours.’

John/Ἰωάννην 8.29

A reflection on John 8.29 ‘Jesus makes it clear that He does not act solo, but always in concert with His Father, anointed by the Spirit. Jesus’ great driving ambition is to please His Abba Daddy, and to only do what He sees Him doing. Whenever we are tempted to act for our own ends, we need to hear these words of Jesus echoing in our hearts – all for Him, only for Him.’

May 16 2017 Day 136 Readings 1 Samuel 18:5-19:24, John 8:31-59. Psalm 112:1-10, Proverbs 15:12-14

וַיְהִי דָוִד לְכָל-דֶּרֶךְ מִשְׁכִּיל וַיְהוּהוּ עִמּוֹ

Va-yehì David le-khòl maskìl, v’Adonài immò.

And David was prudent in everything, and the Lord was with him.

First Samuel 18v14/ד' יח"א שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 18.14 ‘In the midst of a very dangerous and volatile political situation, David acts with integrity and skill, staying one step ahead of the jealous King Saul whose behaviour grows increasingly psychotic. Even in this very human situation, the Lord is with David, guiding and guarding him. The Lord is able to walk with us closely at all times, even through fraught and risky places.’

εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὲν ἀμὲν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμὶ.

Èepen avtis Yeesòus, ‘Amèen, amèen lègo ymìn, prin Abhra’àm genèsthai egò eemì’.

Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham existed, I am.’

John 8.58/Ἰωάννην 8.58

A reflection on John 8.58 ‘This is one of the most outrageous things Jesus ever says. He claims not only to pre-exist the patriarch Abraham, the most revered of all Israel’s ancestors, but He uses of Himself the divine title ‘I am’, by which the Lord made Himself known to Moses in the desert. No wonder the Jewish listeners around Him pick up stones to kill Him when they hear this claim to His being God which Jesus is clearly making. But Jesus at that moment disappears into the homegoing crowds, dispersing at the end of Tabernacles. He has left them in no doubt; He is the Messiah of God.’

May 17 2017 Day 137 Readings 1 Samuel 20:1-21:15, John 9:1-41, Psalm 113:1-114:8, Proverbs 15:15-17

וְלֹא-תִכְרִית אֶת-חֶסֶדְךָ מֵעַם בֵּיתִי עַד-עוֹלָם וְלֹא בְהִכְרַת יְהוָה אֶת-אֲבִי דָוִד אִישׁ מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה וַיִּכְרַת יְהוָה עִם-בֵּית דָּוִד וּבִקֵּשׁ יְהוָה מִיַּד אֲבִי דָּוִד

‘Ve-lò takrìt et-chasdekhà mey’im beytì ad-olàm, ve-lò be-hakhrìt Adonài et-oyebhèy David ish me-àl ha-adamàh’; va-yikhròt Yehònatan im-bèyt David, ‘U-bhiqàsh Adonài mi-yàd oyebhèy David’

(Jonathan to David) ‘..And do not ever revoke your covenant-bonded grace towards my house, not even when the LORD has cut off every enemy of David from off the earth.’ So Jonathan covenanted with the house of David, saying ‘May the LORD require this promise, even from David’s enemies.’

שמואל א כ"ט טז/15,16

A reflection on 1 Samuel 20.15,16 ‘Chesed, the Hebrew word for the obligation imposed by making covenant with another, is one of the most potent concepts of Scripture. Jonathan and David understand it perfectly, even when David is driven from Saul’s presence. Jonathan invokes chesed, the power of their covenant, to call David to faithfulness to their shared brotherhood, even to their future offspring. No wonder that Israel sings over and over again of the ‘chesed of the Lord’ which lasts forever, true to His covenant. No wonder, when the New Testament is translated into Hebrew, the translators use this word, chesed, to render the Greek word for grace!’

ἀπεκρίθη οὖν ἐκεῖνος καὶ εἶπεν· εἰ ἁμαρτωλὸς ἐστὶν οὐκ οἶδα· ἐν οἶδα, ὅτι τυφλὸς ὢν ἄρτι βλέπω.

Apekrithee oun ekinos kai eipen, ‘Ee amartolòs-estin ouk idha; en idha, òti typhlòs òn arti bhlèpo.’

(The man born blind answers the Pharisees.) Then he answered and said, ‘Whether He is a sinner or not, I don’t know; one thing I do know, though - having been blind, from now on I can see!’

John/Ἰωάννην 9.25

A reflection on John 9.25 ‘There is more than a hint of comedy in this wonderful account of the healing by Jesus of the man born blind. The officious Pharisees look down their sniffy noses at the former beggar, accusing him of heresy for supporting Jesus’ healing on their misapplied Sabbath. The man’s parents, cowardly in the face of a possible shunning by the establishment, more or less disown him to avoid trouble for themselves. But the man is a living sign of God’s power to heal, Sabbath or not! He cannot disown the One who has dismissed his blindness; he cannot deny the evidence of his own eyes.’

מִמְזֶרַח-שֶׁמֶשׁ עַד-מְבֹאוֹ מְהַלְלֵל שֵׁם יְהוָה

Mi-mizràch shèmesh ad mebho’ò, mehullàl shem Adonài

From the rising of the sun to its setting, the Lord’s name is a cause for celebration!

תהילים קיג"ג/113.3

טוב-מעט בִּירְאֵת יְהוָה מְאוֹצֵר רַב וּמְהוּמָה בּו

Tobh me-àt be-yiràt Adonài me-òtzar rabh u-mehùmah bho

Better to have little and be in awe of God than wealth a-plenty but trouble with it

משלי טו"ט/Prov.15v16

A reflection on Prov.15.16 ‘When we consider the troubles and pressures money brings, with its attendant anxiety, we understand the writer to the Proverbs here, saying that having little but knowing God is far better than having wealth with trouble. Perhaps Paul was thinking of this saying when he wrote later in 1 Timothy 6.6 ‘Being godly and content is a great gain.’

May 18 2017 Day 138 Readings 1 Samuel 22:1-23:29, John 10:1-21, Psalm 115:1-18, Proverbs 15:18-19

עָגוֹד עֵימִי הַטוֹב הַטוֹב, וְיָדוּעַ אֶת אֵלֵי וְיָדוּעַ אֶת אֵלֵי עַל יְדוּעַ אֶת אֵלֵי עַל יְדוּעַ אֶת אֵלֵי
Egò-eemi o pimèen o kalòs, kai yinòsko ta emà kai yinòskomai ypò ton emòn.

‘I am the good shepherd, and I know those who are mine and I am known by those who are mine.’

John/Ἰωάννην 10.14

A reflection on John 10.14 ‘Walking with Jesus is an intensely personal experience; we are not following a moral code, nor a set of religious teachings, but are in relationship with a living, loving personality. Our chief call is to love Him, to worship Him and to know Him as He knows us.’

יְסוּפֵי יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל בְּנֵיכֶם בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם, לִיהוָה עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִימִים וְאָרֶץ

Yosèph Adonài aleykhèm, aleykhèm ve-àl beneykhèm; berukhìm atèm l'Adonài, osèh shamàyim va-àretz

May the LORD give you increase, you and your children; may you be blessed by the LORD, maker of heaven and earth

תהילים קטו"ד/טו"ט/15&14v115 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 115.14,15 ‘While we are not to desire riches to hoard, the blessing of the Lord is indicated by provision for our needs. The word for ‘blessing’ in the Hebrew is from the same root as the word for ‘knee’, the sense of God inclining, bending towards us as a Father towards little children. This Maker of heaven and earth then, comes close to us to bring us His loving gifts.’

May 19 2017 Day 139 Readings 1 Samuel 24:1-25:44, John 10:22-42, Psalm 116:1-19, Proverbs 15:20-21

וַיָּקָם אָדָם לְרַדְפָּךָ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת-נַפְשְׁךָ וְהִיתָה נַפְשׁ אֲדֹנָי צְרוּרָה בְּצִוּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֵת יְהוָה
אֲלֵהֶיךָ וְאֵת נַפְשׁ אֲבִיךָ יִקְלַעְנָה בְּתוֹךְ כַּף הַקְּלַע

Ve-yaqàm adàm li-redòphkha u-le-bhaqèsh et-napshèkha, ve-haytàh nèphesh Adonì tzeruràh bitzròr ha-chayìm et-Adonài Elohèykha ve-et nèphesh oyebhèkha yiqall'èna be-tòph kaph ha-qalà

(Abigail speaking to David)

And though someone should rise and come after you seeking your life, may the life of my Lord be bound up in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God, and may the lives of your enemies be fired out like a slingshot

שמואל א כה"ט/כט/25v1 Samuel First

A reflection on 1 Samuel 25.29 ‘Abigail, the wife of Nabal, saves her family from retribution for her husband’s arrogance at the hands of David and his men. Her meekness and winsome way wins David over, and, when her husband dies suddenly, causes the King to move in to take her to his wife. Her blessing upon David shows her dependence on God’s ability to keep His beloved secure ‘in the bundle of the living.’ ’

Ἐγένετο τότε τὰ ἐγκαίνια ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις, χειμὼν ἦν·

Eyèneto tôte ta enkaïnïa en tis Yerosolýmïis, cheemòn een.

And it was the time of Hanukkah (the Rededication of the Temple); it was winter.

John/Ἰωάννην 10.22

A reflection on John 10.22 ‘John records for us that Jesus, being a Jew, kept the Jewish festivals, including those not instructed in the Mosaic constitution. This is the only mention in canon Scripture of the eight days of Hanukkah, the commemoration of the miracle of the provision of oil for the rededicated Temple in the period between the end of the Prophets and the Messiah’s day. It emphasises for us that Jesus is part of His people’s culture, and is found in the Temple teaching at their holiday occasions when many of them would be gathered.’

May 20 2017 Day 140 Readings 1 Samuel 26:1-28:25, John 11:1-54, Psalm 117:1-2, Proverbs 15:22-23

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם יָשִׁיב לְאִישׁ אֶת-צִדְקָתוֹ וְאֶת-אֲמָנָתוֹ--אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה הַיּוֹם בְּיָדִי וְלֹא אָבִיתִי לְשַׁלְּחַ
יְדֵי בַמְּשִׁיחַ יְהוָה

V’Adonài yashìbh la-ish et-tzidqatò ve-èt emunató ashèr netankhà Adonài ha-yòm be-yàd ve-lò abhìti lishlòach yadì bi-meshìach Adonài.

(David is speaking)

And may the Lord reward to each one his integrity and trustworthiness, for the Lord put you (Saul) within my grasp, but I was not willing to stretch out my hand against the anointed of the Lord.

First Samuel 26v23/כ"ג א כו"ל שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 26.23 ‘For the second time, David has Saul within his reach, and could finish him off once and for all. But David understands the call and the anointing of God, and refuses to harm him, even though Saul is intent on David’s destruction. David sees that repaying evil with evil does not result in good, but only more harm, and would bring him under the reproof of God. David also blesses his men for their integrity and restraint in following his lead; the maintaining of right action when quick vengeance beckons honours the God who Himself maintains compassion and justice, being slow to anger.’

εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ, κὰν ἀποθάνῃ, ζήσεται

èpen avtèe o Isòus, 'Egò èemi ee anàstasis kai ee zoèe. O pistèvon ees emè, kan apothànee, zèesetai.

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. The one believing in me, even though dead, will live.'

John/Ἰωάννην 11.25

A reflection on John 11.25 'Jesus makes a dynamic statement; He tells Martha that He Himself is the resurrection and the life. That is, in Him is vested all the power of death brought to life, which will be released in the final resurrection of all things. Martha confesses her faith in Him as Messiah and Son of God. Today, He is the One who was dead and is alive forevermore and who calls us into Life with Him.'

May 21 2017 Day 141 Readings 1 Samuel 29:1-31:13, John 11:55-12:19, Psalm 118:1-18, Proverbs 15:24-26

וַתֵּצֵר לְדָוִד מְאֹד כִּי-אָמְרוּ הָעָם לְסַקְלוֹ--כִּי-מָרָה נִפְשׁ כָּל-הָעָם אִישׁ עַל-בָּנָו וְעַל-בְּנֹתָיו וַיִּתְחַזַּק דָּוִד בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהָיו

Va-tètzer le-David me'òd ki amrù ha-àm le-saqlò, ki marà nèphesh kol ha-àm, ish al banàv ve-àl benotàv, ve-yit-chazzèq David b'Adonài Elohàv.

And David was under great pressure, for the people were talking about stoning him, since everyone was feeling bitter inside about the loss of their sons and daughters; but David found himself strength in the Lord his God.

First Samuel 30v6/ל"ו א שמואל

A reflection on 1 Samuel 30.6 'David finds himself in a dangerous position and threatened with death when his army discover their families have been kidnapped by the Amalekites in their absence. But in spite of the threat, David turns to the Lord and prays, finding the way forward. Great leadership does not let go of the provision of God, even in dire circumstances, and looks for the path through the dark place.'

ἔλαβον τὰ βαΐα τῶν φοινίκων καὶ ἐξῆλθον εἰς ὑπάντησιν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἔκραζον ὠσαννά· εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου, ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ. Ἐlabhon ta bha-ia ton phinikon kai exelthon ees ypàndeesin avtò, kai èkrazon, 'Osannà! Eloyeemènos o erchòmenos en onòmati Kyriou, o bhasilèvs tou Israèel!'

וַיִּקְחוּ כַפּוֹת תְּמָרִים בְּיָדָם וַיֵּצְאוּ לְקִרְאָתוֹ וַיִּרְעוּ הוֹשַׁעֲנָא בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה מְלֶכֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Va-yiqechù kappòt temarim be-yadàm, va-yetze-ù liqrato, va-yarì-u, 'Hoshà-na! Barùkh ha-bà be-shèym Adonài, mèlekh Yisra'èl!'

And they took branches of palms in their hands and went out to greet him, shouting, 'Rescue us! (Hosanna!) Blessed is the one coming in the name of the LORD, the King of Israel!'

John 12.13/Ἰωάννην 12.13

A reflection on John 12.13. 'The Jewish writer and follower of Jesus, Alfred Edersheim, writes of the 'Kingdom of Heaven', 'this rule of heaven and Kingship of Jehovah was the very substance of the Old Testament; the object of the calling and mission of Israel.. the underlying idea of all its institutions... the Advent of the promised Messiah, who would permanently establish (by His Spirit) the right relationship between the King and His Kingdom, by bringing in an everlasting righteousness and also cast down existing barriers by calling the kingdoms of this world to be the Kingdom of God. This would indeed be the Advent of the Kingdom of God, such as had been the glowing hope held out by Zechariah, (Zech 14.9) the glorious vision beheld by Daniel.(Dan.7.13-14)' (Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol 1, book II, ch.XI)

May 22 2017 Day 142 Readings 2 Samuel 1:1-2:11, John 12:20-50, Psalm 118:19-29, Proverbs 15:27-28

צָר-לִי עֲלֶיךָ אַחִי יְהוֹנָתָן נִעַמְתָּ לִּי מְאֹד נִפְלְאַתָּה אֶהְבַּתְךָ לִּי מֵאַהֲבַת נְשִׁים
Tzàr-li alèkha, achì Yehonatàn, na'amtà li me'òd; niphlatàh ahabhatkhà li mey-ahabhàt nashìm.

(David, on news of Jonathan's death)

I am so down about losing you, my brother Jonathan, you were so good to me; your love has been better for me than the love of women

Second Samuel 1v26/כ"א ב שמואל

A reflection on 2 Samuel 1.26 'It is abundantly clear from his story that when it comes to his male desires, David is a pursuer of women. This is a man who has several wives, and who even compromises his integrity to ravish Uriah's Bathsheba. But here in his lament over his covenant-brother, Jonathan, he declares that with his death he has lost a love better than that of women. Here were two men in close bond, with no sexual ambiguity in the motives for their friendship, bringing the possibility of a sharing of soul so deep, of a mutual trust, understanding and vulnerability so rich, without ulterior drives or motives, that it had brought them into a connection unknown across the genders. David has lost this kind of love in Jonathan, and later, he will act to honour that bond even beyond death. (See 2 Samuel 9)'

πάτερ, δόξασόν σου τὸ ὄνομα. ἦλθεν οὖν φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ· καὶ ἐδόξασα καὶ πάλιν δοξάσω.

'Pàter, dhòxasòn sou to ònoma.' Èelthen oun phonèe ek tou ouranou, 'Kai edhòxasa kai pàlin dhoxàzo.'

'Father, make Your name glorious.' Then came a voice from the sky, 'And I have made it glorious, and I will make it glorious again.'

John/Ἰωάννην 12.27

A reflection on John 12.27 'Jesus, in anguish at the storm brewing on the horizon, confirms His willingness to follow His Father's plan, so that God may become even more glorious, that is, both present and weighty among His people. At this moment, there is thunder across the sky, and as God speaks encouragement to His struggling Son. Jesus confirms the voice as God's, and gives notice to the devil that his time of reckoning is coming, as Jesus will be impaled and raised up on an unmerited cross in a few days' time.'

ἐγὼ φῶς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐλήλυθα, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ μὴ μείνη.

Egò phos ees ton kòsmon elèlytha, ina pas o pistèvon ees emè en tee skotìa mee mèenee I have come into the world as Light, so that everyone believing on me should not stay in darkness.

John/Ἰωάννην 12.46

A reflection on John 12.46 'Light is the first expression of creation, and Jesus is speaking as the One who brings the light of God into the world. To walk away from Him is to choose chaos and disorder, to embrace Him is to find the source of life itself.'

אָנָא יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא אָנָא יְהוָה הַצְלִיחָה נָא בְרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה
Anà Adonài, hoshiàh-na, anà Adonài, hatzlichàh-na; barùkh ha-bà be-shèm Adonài,
berakhnukhèm mi-bèyt Adonài.

O Lord, rescue! O Lord, bring success! A welcome blessing on the One who comes in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord!

Psalm 118.25-26/ כו"ה קיח"כ

A reflection on Psalm 118.25-26 ‘This refrain from the ancient worship of God’s people is taken up as the Messiah enters Jerusalem centuries later; ‘Hoshià-na, barùkh ha-bà be-shèm Adonài!’ – ‘Hosanna! (Rescue!) a welcome blessing on the One who comes in the Lord’s name!’ The song is still sung as part of the liturgy of many traditions, looking for His coming again, encountering the presence of His Spirit as He comes in the here and now.’

May 23 2017 Day 143 Readings 2 Samuel 2:12-3:39, John 13:1-30, Psalm 119:1-16, Proverbs 15:29-30

וְכָל-הָעָם הִכִּירוּ וַיִּטְּבוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם כֹּכַל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּעֵינֵי כָל-הָעָם טוֹב
Ve-khòl ha-àm hikkìru va-yitàbh be-eynèyhem ke-khòl ashèr asàh ha-mèlek, be-eynèy ha-àm tobh.

And all the people noticed and approved all that the King had done; in their eyes it was good.

Second Samuel 3v36/ לו"ג ב"ל שמואל

A reflection on 2 Samuel 3.36 ‘The opening chapters of Second Samuel paint a picture of a divided and politically dangerous Israel; Abner, the general under Saul has been promoting Ishbosheth, Saul’s son as king, but after taking offence at the prince’s criticism, Abner defects to David and delivers the northern tribes to him. However, Joab, David’s general, takes the opportunity to avenge the earlier death of his brother, Asahel by killing Abner. David disassociates himself from this murder, and instead gives Abner a state funeral, which wins him favour in the eyes of the people. David is not only wise, but politically astute, and his integrity in this matter wins the approval of the now-united people.’

εἰδὼς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι πάντα δέδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ πατήρ εἰς τὰς χειράς, καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθε καὶ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ὑπάγει, ἐγείρεται ἐκ τοῦ δεῖπνου καὶ τίθησι τὰ ἱμάτια. καὶ λαβὼν λέντιον διέζωσεν ἑαυτόν·

Eedhòs o Yeesòus òti pànda dhèdhoken avtò o patèr ees tas chèeras, kai òti apò Theòu exèlthe kai pros ton Theòn ypàyee, eyèretai ek tou dhèepnou kai tìtheesi ta imàtia, kai labhòn lèndìon dhièzosen eavtòn.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given him everything, and that He had come from God and was departing to God, got up from the dinner and took off his clothes, and taking a towel, wrapped it around Himself.

John 13.3,4/ Ἰωάννην 13.3,4

A reflection on John 13.3,4 ‘These two verses seem to be at odds with each other; here is Jesus, the One who knows that everything that is, has been given to Him by the Father, and that He has His source and destiny in the Godhead, acting seemingly in total ignorance of that fact, by lowering Himself to the role of the meanest slave in the household, almost naked, wrapped in a linen loincloth, placing Himself before His apprentices to perform the most menial of service to them. Yet there is a deep mystery here; Jesus is totally secure in His identity and the love of His Father. Unlike the religious officials, who even now are plotting to take His life, He does not have to keep up any appearances, to stand on any ceremony. He is free to take the lowest place, knowing that it does not affect His Sonship. This is the stupendous lesson He wants His beloved to receive; abasing oneself to serve only draws them closer in the affection of the Father.’

May 24 ~~2015~~ 2017 Day ~~144~~ 144 Readings 2 Samuel 4:1-6:23, John 13:31-14:14, Psalm 119:17-32

Proverbs 15:31-32

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-מִיכָל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר-בִּי מֵאֲבִיךָ וּמִכָּל-בֵּיתוֹ לָצֹאת אֹתִי עַל-עַם יְהוָה עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשָׁחַקְתִּי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

Va-yòmer David el-Mikhàl, ‘Liphnèy Adonài ashèr bachàr bì me-abhìkh u-mi-kòl beytò le-tzavòt otì nagìd al-àm Adonài al-Yisraèl ve-sichàqti liphnèy Adonài.’

And David said to Michal, ‘This was for the LORD, who chose me rather than your father and all his house and charged me to be leader over the people of the LORD, over Israel, and I will enjoy myself before the LORD.’

2 Samuel 6v21/כ"א ב ו"שמואל

A reflection on 2 Sam.6.21 ‘David responds to his wife, Michal’s criticism of his exuberant and, in her eyes, undignified worship in the procession of the Box-Chest of God’s promise, by reminding her that his worship is not for her adjudication, but for the Lord’s glory. It seems Michal may have been offended by David’s unkingly behaviour compared to her father, Saul’s conduct, but David makes it clear that a new way of doing things has come, and part of David’s expression is a celebratory enjoyment of God’s presence among His people. We need to remember that the Lord loves all expression of praise that comes from a heart of abandonment to Him, whether loud or soft.’

λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ· οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ.

Lèyee avtò o Yeesòus, ‘Egò-eemi ee odhòs, kai ee alètheia kai ee zoèe; oudhèes èrchetai pros ton patèra ee mee dhi’emòu.

Jesus said to him (Philip), ‘I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father other than by way of me.’

John/Ἰωάννην 14.6

A reflection on John 14.6 ‘Jesus makes it clear to Philip that connection with our Father is not through any ideology nor theology nor religion; the only access to Him is through vital, personal relationship with Jesus the Messiah, the One whom the Father sent to bring us home to His heart.’

דַּבַּקְתִּי בְעֵדוּתֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶל-תְּבִישְׁנִי

Dabhàqti bhe-edotèykha; Adonài, al tebhishèyni.

I have stuck to your narrative; O Lord, do not shame me.

Psalm 119.31/ל"א קיט"ל תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 119.31 ‘In this beautifully-crafted song of praise, where every stanza begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the Singer describes a reliance on the formation received through the Lord’s nurturing and instruction. Here is a cry from the heart, ‘I have stuck with your story, Lord – don’t let me be shamed.’ God has to come through for His people, for the sake of His own reputation. Relying on Him and His account of this world’s unfolding alone is never misplaced.’

May 25 2017 Day 145-145 Readings 2 Samuel 7:1-8:18, John 14:15-31, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 15:33

לך ואמרת אל-עבדי אל-דוד כה אמר יהוה האתה תבנה-לי בית לשבתי כי לא ישבתי בבית למיום העלתי את-בני ישראל ממצרים ועד היום הנה ואהיה מתהלך באהל ובמשכן

Leykh ve-amàrta el-abhdì, el-David, ‘Ko amàr Adonài, Ha-atà tibhnèh-li bhàyt lishbetì? Ki lo yashàbhiti be-bhèyt le-mi-yòm ha-alotì et-benèy Yisra’èl mi-Mitzràim ve-àd ha-yòm ha-zèh va-ehyeh mithalèykh be-òhel u-bhe-mishkàn.’

‘Go and say to my servant, to David, ‘Thus says the LORD, are you going to build a house for me to live in? Actually, I have never lived in a house since the day that I brought the sons of Israel up from Egypt right up until today, but have gone about in a tent, a temporary dwelling-place.’

2 Samuel 7.5,6/ שמואל ב ז"ה

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

A reflection on 2 Sam.7.5,6 ‘It is key to remember that, unlike the Tent of meeting, God did not order the building of the Temple. This was David’s project, his heart to have God dwelling close to Him. But the Lord reminds David that He cannot be contained or limited to a stone box; He is a mobile, all-present God, who travels in and with His people. In New Testament terms, He is living in them as His true temple. Indeed, in Revelation 21.22, we are told that in the new heaven and new earth it has gone, for the Lamb and the Lord God are its temple. It is good to remember, when we build our buildings, that they are facilities, not shrines.’

ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν.

O dhe paràkleetos, to Pnèvma to Àyion o pèmpsi o patèer en to onòmati-mou, ekèinos ymàs dhidhàxi pànda kai ypomnèesi ymàs pànda a èepon ymìn.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you everything and remind you of everything I said to you.

[John/Ἰωάννην 14.26](#)

A reflection on John 14.26 ‘Jesus promises to His apprentice-followers the ‘paràkleetos’, the Advocate, the one who will stand alongside them and support and intercede for them; this is the Holy Spirit, God in receivable form, who is sent by the Father in the name of the Son, reflecting the concerted action of the Trinity in continuing the ministry of Jesus on earth. The Spirit’s role is to instil all that Jesus has taught, and to bring to His people’s mind all Jesus has said. He is the shaper of our lives, the energy of our faith, the reflector of our Saviour’s love. We cannot live without interaction with His life, His person intersecting ours.’

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in 2 Sam.6-8 and 1 Chron 16-17

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

[Greek John 13-21 9m09 Heb John 13-14 7m54 Ps 119 3m29](#)

~~שְׂקֵרָה חַסֵּן וְחֶבֶל הַיָּפִי אִשָּׁה יִרְאֵת יְהוָה הִיא תִּתְהַלַּל~~

~~Shèqer ha-chèn ve-hèbhel ha-yèphi ishàh yiràt Adonài hee-tit-hallèl~~

~~Fairness is fickle and beauty is fleeting, but a woman in awe of the LORD, she is to be celebrated~~

~~תְּשֻׁלֵי לֹא ל"ו/31~~

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~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on Prov.31.30 'The latter part of Proverbs 31 is in celebration of the woman of character, one who does not find her identity in her looks but in how God sees her. She is in awe of God and loves Him, and because of that she does not need to look for security in her image. This woman's actions will commend her, and she is to be celebrated.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Proverbs at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

May 266 20174 Day 146-146 Readings 2 Samuel 9:1-11:27, John 15:1-27, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 16:1-3

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ דָוִד אֶל-תִּירָא כִּי עָשָׂה אֲעֲשֶׂה עִמָּךְ חֶסֶד בְּעִבּוֹר יְהוֹנָתָן אֲבִיךָ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי לְךָ אֶת-
כָּל-שְׂדֵה שָׁאוּל אֲבִיךָ וְאַתָּה תֹאכַל לֶחֶם עַל-שֻׁלְחָנִי תָמִיד

Va-yomèr lo David, 'Al-tirà, ki asòh e'esèh imkhà chèsed ba'abhùr Yehònatan abhìkha, ve-hashìbhoti lekhà et-kol-sedèh Sha'ùl abhìkha ve-atàh tokhèl lèchem al-shulchanì tamid.'

And David said to him (Mephibosheth), 'Don't be scared, because I intend to enact covenant-bonded grace towards you for the sake of your father, Jonathan, and to return to you all the estates of Saul your grandfather, and you will eat at my table from now on.'

שמואל ב ט"ז/9.7

A reflection on 2 Samuel 9.7 'The disabled, exiled son of the late Prince Jonathan of Israel, Mephibosheth, hears words from King David he could never have hoped to hear; where he expects a sword to fall on his neck, instead, blessing crowns his head, as David fulfils the covenanted obligation which binds him to the promise made to one who should have been his enemy. Mephibosheth, redeemed by a promise made before his birth, is shown grace he could never have earned and restored to his lost inheritance, brought to feast at the King's table. What an amazing foretaste of our redemption, restoration and inheritance in Jesus, our covenant head, the One who has bound Himself through His blood to rescue us, who were once His enemies!'

ἐν τούτῳ ἔδοξάσθη ὁ πατήρ μου, ἵνα καρπὸν πολὺν φέρητε, καὶ γένησθε ἐμοὶ μαθηταί.; Psalm 127, Song of Songs 1.1-8.14

דודי לי ואני לו הרעה בשושנים

Dodi li, va'anì lo, ha-ro'èh ba-shoshannim

~~My lover's mine, and I'm His, who shepherds among the lilies~~

~~Song of Songs 2v16/שיר השרים ב"טז~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on Song of Songs 2.16 'Anyone who doubts God's plan for great sexual connection between man and woman needs to read Song of Songs. This erotic love poem, a metaphor for the relationship between God and man, is a beautiful, sensuous, profound exploration of human physical love. It ends by stressing the irrevocable bond of covenant which faithful, matrimonial love brings (8.6-7); such a powerful force in human beings takes a lifetime for a husband and wife to fully express.'~~

En tòuto edhoxàsthee o patèr mou, ina karpòn polýn phèreete, kai yèneesthe emì matheetài. By this my Father's glory is made greater, in your producing a lot of fruit, so becoming my apprentice-followers.

[John/Ἰωάννην](#) 15.8

A reflection on John 15.8 'To understand what Jesus means by 'producing a lot of fruit', that which brings His Father greater honour, we need to look at the fruit Jesus produces. He transforms the world He encounters, bringing freedom, hope, resurrection and healing; we do His words an injustice if we just internalise and spiritualise His words here into either just increased inner 'niceness' or getting more souls for heaven. We show we are Jesus' apprentices when we do what our Master does.'

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Psalms and Song of Songs at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~May 27 20174 Day [147-147](#) Readings [2 Samuel 12:1-31](#), [John 16:1-33](#), [Psalm 119:65-80](#), [Proverbs 16:4-5](#)~~

מדוע בזית את-דבר יהוה לעשות הרע בעיני את אוריה החתי הכית בחרב ואת-אשתו לקחת לך לאשה ואתו הרגת בחרב בני עמון

'Madùa bazita et-debhàr Adonài, la-asòt ha-rà be-eynày, et-Uryàh ha-Chitti hikkìta bha-chèrebh ve-èt ishtò la-qàchat le-khà le-ishàh, ve-otò haràgta be-chèrebh benèy Ammòn?'

(Nathan the Prophet is speaking to David) :

'Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing this evil thing in my sight, having Uriah the Hittite killed by the sword and taking his wife to become your own, having had him killed by the weapons of the Ammonites?'

[2 Samuel 12.9/ט"ב](#) [שמואל ב](#)

A reflection on 2 Samuel 12.9 'The Scriptures do not shrink from revealing the full depths of man's brokenness, even when that man is the favoured King David. The Bathsheba debacle is notorious as demonstrating even the most Godly person's ability to crash the vehicle of their lives on the rocks of lust and deception. Nathan's words convey the Lord's exasperation, that,

having provided David with all the blessings of kingship, having rescued him from Saul's clutches and having established covenant with him, David is prepared to override the promise of his destiny for a moment of tawdry liaison, with tragic consequences. David thought to hide his sin, but too much is riding on this man in the unfolding plan of redemption for God to allow him to get away with it.'

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν· συμφέρι ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω. ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ παράκλητος οὐκ ἐλεύσεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

All' egò teen alètheian lègo ymìn; symphèri ymìn ìna egò apèltho. Èàn gar mee apèltho, o paràkleetos ouk elèvsetai pros ymàs; èàn dhe porèvtho, pèmpso avtòn pros ymàs.

(Jesus is speaking to His disciples.)

'But I'm telling you the truth; it's to your advantage that I'm leaving. Because if I don't leave, the advocate can't come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.'

John 16.7/Ἰωάννην 16.7

; 1 Kings 11.1-40

~~וַיְהִי לַעֲת זְקֵנָת שְׁלֹמֹה נִשְׂיו הַטּו אֶת לְבָבו אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרִים וְלֹא הָיָה לְבָבו
שְׁלֹם עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיו כְּלִבְב דָּוִד אָבִיו~~

~~Va-yehì le-èt ziqnàt Shlomò, nashàyv hittù et-lebhabhò acharèy elohim acherim, ve-
lò hayàh lebhabhò shalèm im Adonài Elohàyv ki lbhàbh David abhiv~~

~~And so it was that as Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart away to go after alien gods, and his heart was not wholly with the LORD his God as David his father's heart had been~~

~~1 Kings 11v4/ד"א מלכים א~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on 1 Kings 11.4 'Solomon, despite the gift and covenant he had received from the Lord, allowed himself to be subverted by his many wives to the worthless worship of the non-gods of other nations. Anything or anyone who draws us away from Jesus, our first love, is to be strenuously resisted and rejected, however reasonable it seems.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings 11 at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on John 16.7 'Jesus has to go; He tells His disciples that His time with them is coming to a close, that the next phase is approaching. If Jesus had stayed around, He would have been limited to His one earthly body. Because He has left and is in the presence of the Father, interceding for His bride, the Advocate, God's Spirit, who travels with and in us, working through and for us has been released to us, and is reproducing the works and character of Jesus throughout the earth, for the rest of time. This is why Pentecost is so key; this is why John the Baptist announced Jesus as the 'immerser in the Holy Spirit.' Jesus affirms that the Spirit's life and action in us is indispensable to the story of the presence of God coming to us; for this Jesus died and rose, now present with us by His Spirit.'~~

May 28 2014-2017 Day 1488 Readings 2 Samuel 13:1-39, John 17:1-26, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 16:6-7

וַיַּעַן יוֹנָדָב בֶּן-שֹׁמֵעָ אָחִי-דָוִד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-יְאִמֵּר אֶת-כָּל-הַנְּעָרִים בְּנֵי-הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמֵּיתוּ--
 כִּי-אֲמָנוֹן לְבַדּוֹ מָתָּה כִּי-עַל-פִּי אֲבִשְׁלוֹם הַיְתָה שׁוֹמֵה מִיּוֹם עָנַתוֹ אֶת תַּמָּר אָחִיתוֹ
 Va-ya'an Yonadabh ben-Shim'ah achi David va-yomer, 'Al-yomar Adoni et kol ha-ne'arim
 beney ha-melekh hemitu; ki Amnon lebhado meyt, ki al pi Abhshalom haytah sumah mi-yom
 anoto Tamâr ahotò.'

Then Jonadab, son of David's brother Shimeah, answered, saying, 'Do not say that all the boys, the King's sons have been murdered; only Amnon is dead, because Absalom ordered it; he has been plotting this since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar.'

2 Samuel 13.32/ג' לב/שמואל ב

A reflection on 2 Samuel 13.32 'In the previous chapter, David's failure with Bathsheba was uncovered. In this chapter we see the brokenness seeping into his growing family; incest and fratricide, among people who are supposed to carry the hopes of Israel for the future, leading to a saving Messiah! Amnon's rape of Tamar and Absalom's vengeance on Amnon warn us that the poisoned shard of evil lying in us can warp and wound God's intentions for our lives. Only God's faithfulness and covenanted grace can rescue this family, and man as a whole from the downward spiral of darkness.'

~~;Ecclesiastes part 1 (see notes for readings)~~

~~ἀγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστι~~

~~Agiason avtous en tee aletheia; o logos o sos aletheia-esti~~

~~Make them wholly distinctive by Your authenticity; Your meaning-filled word is itself totally authentic.~~

~~John/Ἰωάννην 17.17~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on John 17.17 'Jesus prays for **their His friends**' complete joy, and their enabling to continue in that joy in the midst of a world which will hate them and kill them. Jesus is not asking for their rescue, but for their empowering to stand fast in the battle. Jesus prays that they may be commissioned to their one, holy, single purpose, yielded wholly and unavailable to all other claimants – for this is what sanctification is. This is why Jesus is also about to yield to the Father without reserve, so that they may **be-do** the same.'~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~דְּבָרֵי חֲכָמִים בְּנֶחֱמָה וְשִׁמְעִים מִזְעִקַּת מוֹשֵׁל בַּכְּסִילִים~~

~~Dibhrèy chakhamim benèchat nishma'im mi-za'qat moshèl ba-kesilim~~

~~The words of the wise are more favourable to hear than the shouts of a leader of fools~~

~~קוֹהֶלֶת א ט"ז/עֵקֶב~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on Ecclesiastes 9.17 'Often, wisdom speaks quietly without pushing itself forward. Folly, on the other hand, tends to make a big noise. In a day of brash promotionalism and transient celebrity, we need to be sure to drink at the wells of wisdom, whose source is the awe of God.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in Ecclesiastes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

**May 29 2014-2017 Day 149-149 Reading; Ecclesiastes part 2 (see notes for readings)s 2
Samuel 14:1-15:22, John 18:1-24, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 16:8-9**

כי-מות נמות וכמים הנגרים ארצה אשר לא יאספו ולא-ישא אלהים נפש וחשב מחשבות
לבבתי ידח ממנו נדח

Ki mot-namùt ve-kha-màyim ha-niggarim artzàh ashèr lo ye'asephù, ve-lò yissà Elohim
nèphesh, ve-chashàbh machashavòt le-bhiltù yiddàch mimènnu niddàch.

(The Tekoan woman appeals to David to bring back his exiled son, Absalom)

'For we all have to die, like water spilled on the ground that can't be picked up again; but
God doesn't take our life away, rather He has worked out a way for the exile not to remain in
exile away from Him.'

Second Samuel 14v14/ שמואל ב יד"ד

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

A reflection on 2 Sam.14.14 'Death is a robber, and unwelcome whenever it comes. But the
Tekoan woman, appealing to David to be reconciled to his son Absalom, reminds the king
that God does not allow even death to keep us from Him, providing a way for the estranged
to be brought close to Him. In Jesus Christ, God has broken the power of death, and promises
in John 11.25 that, even though we die, we shall live in Him. '

εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ· βάλε τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὴν θήκην· τὸ ποτήριον ὁ
δέδωκέ μοι ὁ πατήρ, οὐ μὴ πίω αὐτό;

Èpen oun o Yeesòus to Pètro, 'Bhàle teen màchairan ees teen thèeken; to potèerion o
dhèdhokè-mi o patèer, ou mee pìo avtò?'

Then Jesus said to Peter, 'Put that sword back in its sheath; will I not drink the cup which the
Father has given me?'

John/Ἰωαννῆν 18.11

A reflection on John 18.11 'In cutting off the High Priest's ear, Peter acts from the best
human motives – the defence of His beloved Rabbi; yet Peter reckons without the overview
of the Father which Jesus has. This midnight rabble, come to arrest Him, is the very means to
reach the altar on which the Son will be given as Passover Lamb for the world. Jesus is ready
for the ordeal, even though Peter does not understand.'

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in 2 Samuel 12-14 and 1 Chronicles 3 at
<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~עֲשׂוֹת סִפְרִים הַרְבֵּה אֵין קֵץ וְלִהְיוֹת הַרְבֵּה יִגְעַת בָּשָׂר~~

~~Asòt-sepharim harbèh eyn qoyts, ve-lahàg harbèh yeg'at basàr~~

~~Of the making of books galore, there's no end, but studying much wears
the body~~

~~קוּחַלֵּת אִיב"ב/ Ecclesiastes 12v12~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on Ecclesiastes 12.12 'In an age where we are bombarded with information at every moment, it is worth hearing the words of the ancient sage speaking in a day before printing and before mass literacy. He reminds us that there will always be more available than we can assimilate, and that our intake needs to be at a humane level. We cannot know everything, and we need to be at rest within our limitations.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in Ecclesiastes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

May 30 2014-2017 Day 1500 Readings; 2 Samuel 15:23-16:23, John 18:25-19:22, Psalm 119:113-128, Proverbs 16:10-11

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ לְצָדוֹק הַשֵּׁב אֶת-אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים הָעִיר אִם-אֶמְצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה
וְהִשְׁבֵּנִי וְהִרְאֵנִי אֶתוֹ וְאֶת-נְוֵהוּ וְאִם כֹּה יֹאמֶר לֹא חִפְצָתִי בְּךָ הִנְנִי יַעֲשֶׂה-לִּי כְאֲשֶׁר
טוֹב בְּעֵינָיו

Va-yomèr ha-mèlekh le-Tzadòq, 'Hashèbh et-aròn ha-Elohìm ha-ìr; im emtzà cheyn be-eynèy Adonài, ve-heshibhàni, ve-hiranì otò ve-èt navèhu, ve-ìm koh yomèr 'lo chaphàtzti bakh', hineni ya'asèh-li ka-ashèr tobh be-eynàv.

And the King said to Zadok, 'Take God's ark back to the city. If I find favour in the LORD's eyes, He will bring me back and let me see it and His house, but if He says, 'I am displeased with you', well then, let Him do with me as He sees best

Second Samuel 15v25&26/ שמואל ב טו"כה כו

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on 2 Sam.15.25,26 'Here is David at his nadir, ousted from the throne in favour of his popular, scheming son Absalom. He recognises his own weakness and dependence on the Lord for rescue, but does not insist on keeping the box-chest of God's presence with Him. This would have been the most painful separation, to be apart from the one place he loved above all to be, close to the presence-power of God. He commits his future, for good or ill, to the God whom he trusts to right-wisely all things.'~~

~~; Ecclesiastes part 3 (see notes for readings)~~

~~ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· ἡμεῖς νόμον ἔχομεν, καὶ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἡμῶν ὀφείλει ἀποθανεῖν, ὅτι ἑαυτὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐποίησεν. Ὅτε οὖν ἤκουσεν ὁ Πιλάτος τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, μᾶλλον ἐφοβήθη, καὶ εἰσηλθεν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον πάλιν καὶ λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ· πόθεν εἶ σύ; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀπόκρισιν οὐκ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ.~~

~~Apekritheesan avtò i Ioudhaïee, 'Eemèes nòmòn èchomen, kai katà ton nòmòn ophilee apothanìn, òti eavtòn yiòn tou Theou epèeisen.' Òte oun èekousen o Pilàtos tòuton ton lògon, màllon ephobhèethee, kai eesèlthen is to praitòrion pàlin kai lèyei to Isou, 'Pòthen ee see?' o dhe Ieesòus apòkrisin ouk èdhoken avtò.~~

~~The Jews responded to (Pilate), 'We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself out to be a son of God.' Then when Pilate heard this statement, he was even~~

more scared, and went back into the Praetorium and said to Jesus, 'Just where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no reply.

John/יואן 19.7-9

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

A reflection on John 19.7-9 'Pilate is now fearing a mass uprising, and takes Jesus into the palace again. He knows something beyond his control is going on, sees the terrible drama being played out, and wonders how he has got enmeshed in this tragic story. 'Where are you from?' he says, and when Jesus is silent, reminds the broken man that he is in charge around here, and has power to hand Jesus over or to save Him.'

סִתְרִי וּמַגִּנִּי אֶתָּה לְדַבְרֶךָ יְחִלְתִּי

Sitrì u-magìnì àttah; lidbharkhà yichàlti.

My hiding place and shield are you; I am expectant for Your word.

Psalm 119.114/תהילים קיט"קיד

A reflection on Psalm 119.114 'The Singer of Israel often speaks of hiding in God and taking refuge in Him as a shield. There is no shame in sheltering under the protection of the Most High from the onslaughts of evil and pain; in fact, it is there that the Singer expects to hear God speaking most clearly.'

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in 2 Samuel 14-16 and Psalm 3 at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~טוֹב לִלְכֶת אֶל-בֵּית אַבֵּל מִלְכֶת אֶל-בֵּית מִשְׁתֶּה בְּאִשֶּׁר הוּא סוֹף כָּל-הָאָדָם
וְהַחַיִּיתָן אֶל-לִבּוֹ~~

~~Tobh la-lèkhet el-bèyt èybhel mi-lèkhet el-bèyt mishtèh, ba-ashèr hu soph kol-ha-adàm, ve-ha-chài yittèn el-libbò~~

~~Better to go to a house of mourning than to a house of feasting, for there is the outcome of every man, and the living will take it to heart.~~

~~קוהלת א'ז"ב/7v2/עוהלת~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on Ecclesiastes 7.2 'There is something about funerals, says the Preacher, which teaches us more than parties. They teach us to value each day of our life and be thankful for it, and that we are not boundless; all of us die. Mourning may be more formative of long-term character and dependence on God than pleasure, even though it is unpleasant. I heard a great preacher say not so long ago, 'I'm not afraid of dying, I'm afraid of not living first.''~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in Ecclesiastes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at

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May 31 2017 Day 1514 Readings 2 Samuel 17:1-29, John 19:23-42, Psalm 119:129-152, Proverbs 16:12-13

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִשְׁלֹום וְכָל-אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹבָה עֲצַת חוּשֵׁי הָאֲרָכִי מֵעֲצַת אַחִיתֹפֶל וַיְהוּהוּ צֹנֶה לְהַפֵּר אֶת-עֲצַת אַחִיתֹפֶל הַטּוֹבָה לְבַעֲבוֹר הַבֵּיא יְהוָה אֶל-אֲבִשְׁלֹום אֶת-הָרָעָה
Va-yòmer Abhshalòm ve-khòl Yisra'èl, 'Tobhàh atzàt Chùshai ha-Arkì mey-atzàt Achitòphel.' V'Adonài tzivàh le-haphèr et-atzàt Achitòphel ha-tobhàh le-bha'abhùr habhì Adonài el-Abhshalòm et-ha-ra'àh.

And Absalom with all of Israel said, 'The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than the advice of Ahitophel'; for the Lord was directing their rejection of Ahitophel's sound counsel in order for the Lord to bring disaster on Absalom.

שמואל ב יז"ד/17.14

A reflection on 2 Sam. 17.14 'In our pride, we humans do not want to think of God intervening in any way in our affairs; we see ourselves as free agents, lords of our own destiny. To think in this way is to reckon without the right of God to intervene in His Story to direct the action; to vindicate the oppressed, to deliver the enslaved, to frustrate the plans of evil. In the case of Absalom, a simple rejection of advice was all that was needed on his part to seal his downfall.'

ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβε τὸ ὄξος ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπε· τετέλεσται· καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα.

Ὁτε οὖν ἐλάβη τὸ ὄξος, ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπε, 'Τετέλεσται'; καὶ κλίνων τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα.

וַיִּטַּעַם יֵשׁוּעַ מִן-הַחֲמִץ וַיֹּאמֶר נִשְׁלַם וַיִּט אֶת-רֹשׁוֹ וַיִּפְקֹד אֶת-רוּחוֹ
Va-yitàm Yeshùa min ha-hòmetz, va-yòmer, 'Nishlàm', va-yèt et-roshò va-yaphqèd et-ruchò.
So when He had taken the sour wine, Jesus said, 'It is complete.'; and bowing his head, he yielded His spirit.

John 19.30/Ἰωάννην 19.30

A reflection on John 19.30. 'Jesus comes to the moment on the cross where He knows all is done; John records His last word in the Greek as 'tetèlestai', meaning, 'it is accomplished, it is achieved.' The tense of the verb is perfect, meaning it has been done with an ongoing effect still in force. Jesus completed the work, and it is still complete. In the Hebrew version, Jesus says 'Nishlàm', 'it is paid for, it is made whole', the same root as the word 'shalom', completion and peace. This was not a cry of exhaustion, of despair. Jesus' last word was a word of attainment, having bought for us our restoration to God by His sacrifice.'

; Ecclesiastes part 4 (see notes for readings)

הַבָּל הַבָּלִים אָמַר הַקּוֹהֵלֶת הַכֹּל הַבָּל

Habhèl habhalim, amàr ha-qohèlet, ha-kòl hàbhel

So transient and ephemeral, says the Preacher, everything is so transient

Ecclesiastes 12v8/ה"ח/12v8

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

A reflection on Ecclesiastes 12.8 ‘The word in the Hebrew original of this verse for ‘transient’ is ‘habhel’, a puff of breath. It’s the same root from which the name Abel comes, the first man to die in the Bible, and reminds us that life is a visit, not a stay. The good news is that Jesus Christ has come to give us life that goes beyond this transient breath—it’s why His shed blood ‘speaks a better outcome than that of Abel’s’ (Heb.12.24)’

Read the rest of Colin’s notes on today’s reading in Ecclesiastes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year’s notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

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June 1 20174 Day 152-152 Reading; 1 Kings 12;1-33, 2 Chron. 11.13-17, 1 Kings 13.1-32s 2 Samuel 18:1-19:10, John 20:1-31, Psalm 119:153-176, Proverbs 16:14-15

וַיִּרְגַז הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַל עַל-עַלְיָת הַשַּׁעַר וַיִּבְךְ וְכֹה אָמַר בְּלִכְתּוֹ בְּנֵי אַבְשָׁלוֹם בְּנֵי אַבְשָׁלוֹם
מי-יִתֵּן מוֹתִי אֲנִי תַחֲתֶיךָ אַבְשָׁלוֹם בְּנֵי בְנֵי

Va-yirgàz ha-mèlekh, va-ya’al al-aliyàt ha-sha’ar va-yèbhk, ve-khòh amàr be-lekhtò, ‘Benì Abhshalòm, benì, bhenì Abhshalòm! Mi yittèn mutì anì takhtèkha, Abhshalòm, benì, bhenì!’ And the King (David) was overwhelmed and went up to the gate-room and wept, and said as he went, ‘My son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would that someone had killed me instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!’

Second Samuel 18v33/ שמואל ב י"ט א'

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year’s notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

A reflection on 2 Sam.18.33 ‘Despite Absalom’s treachery against him, David’s love for his son is not diminished. It is clear that David wanted the usurper’s life preserved, and he mourns deeply for his killing, to the point that his troops feel disgraced rather than congratulated on their victory. Perhaps David had envisaged reconciliation and forgiveness, just as he had shown to Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9. But the human hunger for revenge snuffed out that hope. David’s heart is after God, who, we are told, loved the world, even while we were His enemies, and sent Christ to die for us.’

εἶτα λέγει τῷ Θωμᾶ· φέρε τὸν δάκτυλόν σου ὧδε καὶ ἴδε τὰς χεῖράς μου, καὶ φέρε τὴν χεῖρά σου καὶ βάλε εἰς τὴν πλευράν μου, καὶ μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός.

Èeta lèyei to Thomà, 'Phère ton dhàktylon sou kai ìdhe tas cheeràs mou, kai phère teen cheerà sou kai bhàle ees teen plevràn mou, kai mee yìnou àpistos allà pistòs.'

Then He (Jesus) said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and examine my hands, and take your hand and stick it into my side, and don't be faithless but faith-full.'

John/Ἰωαννῆν 20.27

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year’s notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

A reflection on John 20 .27 ‘A week later, they are in the same place, with the doors locked, and Jesus returns, this time confronting Thomas’s doubt, inviting him to fulfil his morbid intention. Thomas is abashed and can only worship – ‘my Lord and my God’ - Jesus does not correct him, nor reject the title. He simply blesses those who will not have the privilege of

seeing those wounds with their own eyes before they believe on Him and entrust themselves to their Lord and God.’

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

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~~וַיַּעַץ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי עֲגֻלֵי זָהָב וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם רַב לָכֶם מַעֲלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
מִצְרָיִם אֲשֶׁר הֵעֵלֹךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם~~

~~Va-yiva'atz ha-mèlekh, va-ya'as shenèy eglèy zahabh, va-yomer alèyhem, 'Rabh lakhèm mey-alòt Yerushalàyim; hinèh elohèykha Yisraèl, ashèr he'elùkha mey-èretz Mitzràyim.'~~

~~So the King (Jeroboam of Israel) conferred, and made two calves of gold, and said to them, 'It's too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; look, these are the gods of Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.'~~

~~מלכים יב"ח/1 Kings 12v28~~

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

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~~A reflection on 1 Kings 12.28 'It is hard to understand how most of Israel was misled into accepting a calf idol as their focus of worship, having experienced as a nation the powerful deliverance of the Lord and His bonded grace and love. At the division of the kingdom, here in 1 Kings 12, the northern king is interested only in keeping his separated people's allegiance, at any cost. The political drive for power means he must distract his subjects from the southern Temple. Hence, Jeroboam foists on them this meaningless non-god and the decline of the northern kingdom sets in, as the worship of the true Lord, Maker of heaven and earth, is abandoned.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

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~~רָאָה כִּי־פָקוּדֶיךָ אֶהְבְּתִי יְהוָה כַּחֲסֻדְךָ חַיֵּי~~

~~Re'èh, ki phiqudèkha ahabhti, Adonài; ke-chasdekhà chayèni~~

~~See how I have loved your principles, LORD; in keeping with Your covenant-bonded grace, bring me life! Psalm 119v159/קנט"ק~~

A reflection on Psalm 119.159 'This, the longest of the Psalms, is a literary masterpiece.

Divided into alphabetical sections (called 'acrostic'), every line of each section begins with the same letter. Here, towards the end of the song, the Singer delights in the Lord's divine boundaries which give structure to his existence. He appeals to God's 'hesed' obligation to His covenant to bless him with that life of which those principle are the anchors. '

~~בְּאוּר־פְּנֵי־מֶלֶךְ חַיִּים וּרְצוֹנוֹ כְּעַב מַלְקוֹשׁ~~

~~[Be'òr penèy mèlekh chayìm ve-retzonò ke-àbh malqòsh.](http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf)~~

In the light of the King's face there is life, and His favour is like a cloudful of spring rain.
Proverbs 16.15/ט"ו טז"א מְשָׁלִי

A reflection on Proverbs 16.15 'Rain is a key factor in life in a hot climate; the rains are a sign of blessing and life. In the same way, an anointed leader can bring life and regeneration to arid places, especially when that leader is the King of all Kings, the light of life Himself, Jesus the Messiah!'

June 2 20174 Day 1533 Readings 2 Samuel 19:11-20:13, John 21:1-25, Psalm 120:1-7, Proverbs 16:16-17; ~~From Kings and Chronicles (see notes for readings)~~

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד מַה לִּי וְלָכֶם בְּנֵי צְרוּיָהּ כִּי-תַהְיוּ לִי הַיּוֹם לְשֹׁטָן הַיּוֹם יוֹמַת אִישׁ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי הַלּוֹא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי הַיּוֹם אֲנִי-מֶלֶךְ עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל

Va-yòmer David, 'Mah li ve-lakhèm, benèy Tzeruyàh? Ki tihyù li ha-yòm le-satàn! Ha-yòm yumàt ish be-Yisra'èl, ki ha-lò yadà'ti ki ha-yòm anì mèlekh al-Yisra'èl?'

And David said 'What have I to do with the kind of things you are suggesting, sons of Zeruijah? For today you are turning out to be more like my enemies! Should any Israelis be killed today since I already know I am King over Israel? '

שמואל ב יט"ג כג/19v23

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

A reflection on 2 Sam.19.23 'Shimei, the man who cursed David on his leaving Jerusalem, is now begging for pardon upon David's restoration to the throne. Abishai wants to dispatch the plaintiff with the sword of vengeance, but David, confident in his own identity, is not looking for a head to roll. 'Do I need anyone to die to prove my power?' he is asking. David lets Shimei live this day, though his eventual death is at the hands of Solomon, whom David asks to bring Shimei to justice for his treason.'

λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· Σίμων Ἰωνᾶ, φιλεῖς με; ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· φιλεῖς με; καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Κύριε, σὺ πάντα οἶδας, σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε. λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· βόσκει τὰ πρόβατά μου.

Lèyee avtò to triton, 'Simon Yonà, philèes me?' elypèethee o Pètros òti èpen avtò to triton, 'philèes me?' Kai èpen avtò, 'Kýrie, see pànda ìdhas, see yinòskis òti philò se.' Lèyee avtò o Yeesòus, 'Bhòske ta pròbhatà-mou.'

The third time, He (Jesus) said to him, 'Simon son of John, are we friends?' Peter was upset that the third time He had used the words 'are we friends?' and said to Him, 'Lord, you know everything, you know we are friends!' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'

John 21.17/Ἰωάννην 21.17

A reflection on John 21.17 'The point John is making clearly here in relaying the conversation between Jesus and Simon after breakfast on the beach, is that while the previous twice Jesus has asked Peter, 'Do you love me?', now, instead of asking in Greek, 'agapàs me?', He uses back to Peter the word the disciple has been using in response to Jesus' questions – 'Are we really friends? (Philèes me?)' Simon is painfully aware that on the eve of Jesus' death, he thrice denied his Master, having promised he would be faithful to Him. Now,

Jesus restores him, but needs [Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in 2 Samuel 19 to 20 at http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf](http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf)

~~וַבְּרֹאֵת יְהוָה כִּי נִכְנְעוּ הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה אֶל שְׁמַעְיָה לֵאמֹר נִכְנְעוּ לֹא אֲשַׁחֲתֶם וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם כְּמַעַט לְפָלִיטָה וְלֹא תִמְדַּךְ הַמָּתִי בִירוּשָׁלַם בְּיַד נְשִׁיפָה~~

~~U-bhi re'èt Adonài ki nikna'ù, hayàh debhàr Adonài el Shemayàh lemòr, 'Nikkna'ù lo ashehitem ve natàti lahèm ki me'at liphleytàh, ve lò tittàkh chamati bi Yerushalàyim be-yàd Shìshaq~~

~~When the LORD saw that they were humbling themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah saying, 'They have humbled themselves, so I will not destroy them but will give them a little bit of rescue and my displeasure will not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of (the enemy) Shishaq.~~

~~דְּבַרֵי הַיָּמִים יב"ז/7~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on 2 Chronicles 12.7 'While the northern kingdom has separated and gone after worthless non-gods and political separation, the southern kingdom is not doing much better. Rehoboam, son of Solomon, also abandons God's ways and plays fast and loose with the covenant. However, when the Egyptians attack, the leaders of Judah turn to God for help, and through the prophet Shemaiah are told they will get 'a little bit of deliverance'. But overall the Chronicler draws the conclusion that Rehoboam's is an evil regime, because he misleads the people away from the Lord. People bent on power have little regard for the ways of God.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

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~~[him to come face to face with his own failure](#), not brushing it under the carpet, [so that he can recognise the incredible grace Jesus offers him as He calls the one who denied Him to take up again His call to 'feed my sheep.'](#)~~

יְהוָה הִצִּילָה נַפְשִׁי מִשֵּׁפֶת-שָׁקֶר מִלְּשׁוֹן רְמִיָּה

Adonài hatzilàh naphshì mis-phàt shèqer, mi-lashòn remiyàh.

Lord, rescue me from lying lips, from a treacherous tongue.

Psalm 120.2/ב/כ"ב

A reflection on Psalm 120.2 'In the New Testament (Jas.3.6), the Jewish apostle Jacob, whom we call James, leader of the Jerusalem assembly of disciples, recalls the dangers of the unbridled tongue, which he says is 'a whole world of unrighteousness'; no doubt, as a Jew he had in mind the words of the Singer of Israel, who cries out here to God for rescue from lying lips and a treacherous tongue, his own as much as those of others around him. Deceit is a trap, and lies are webs of oppression, from which only speaking truth in integrity frees us.'

Acts 1 Gk 0'0 Heb 0'00

June 3 2014-2017 Day 154-154 Readings 2 Samuel 20:14-21:22, Acts 1:1-26, Psalm

121:1-8, Proverbs 16:18

וַיַּעַזְרוּ-לוֹ אַבְיָשִׁי בֶן-צְרוּיָה וַיִּירָ אֶת-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּמְתְּהוּ אִזּוּ נִשְׁבְּעוּ אַנְשֵׁי-דָוִד לֹא לֵאמֹר לֹא-

תִּצָּא עוֹד אֲתָנוּ לְמִלְחָמָה וְלֹא תִכְבֶּה אֶת-נֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל

Va-ya'azàr lo Abhishài ben Tzeruyàh, va-yàkh et ha-Pelishtù va-yemitèyhu; az nishbe'ù anshèy David lo leymòr lo teytzè od ittànù la-milchamàh ve-lò tekhabèt et-nèyr Yisra'èl.

Then Abishai son of Zeruiah rescued him (David) and struck down the Philistine and killed him; then David's men gave him an ultimatum, saying, 'You will not go out to battle with us any longer; we do not want the Lamp of Israel extinguished!'

שמואל ב כא"ז/21v17

June 3 2014 Day 154 Reading

A reflection on 2 Sam. 21.17 'In his last battle, David is almost taken out by a Philistine warrior, but his back is covered by Abishai Ben-Zeruiah who comes to his rescue and kills David's attacker. At this point, David's inner council give him an ultimatum – it is time for the King to retire from the field of battle, to prevent the 'Lamp of Israel' from being snuffed out before his time. Here is a pointer to those who are a long way down the path of life to be realistic about their faculties when age comes calling, and to act in accordance with their life-stage so that they stay around to bring the wisdom of experience if not the zest of youth.'

ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας.

Ὅτι Ioànnes men ebhàptisen ýdhati, ymèes dhe bhaptisthèsesesthe en Pnèvmati Ayìo ou metà pollàs tàvtas eemèras.

For while John immersed people in water, you will actually be plunged into the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

Acts/Πραξεις 1.5

A reflection on Acts 1.5 'It is worth noticing that, in His resurrection body, Jesus can still sit and eat with His friends! Jesus at this meal instructs them again to wait until they have received the promised gift of the Father of which He has already spoken to them, the immersion, the plunging into the river of God, the living water of the Holy Spirit of which Jesus spoke in John 7.37. If these first messengers of Jesus needed this encounter, how much more do we, who succeed them!'

~~– Kings & Chronicles on Asa and Ba'asha (see notes for readings)~~

הנה לא-יגום ולא ישן שומר ישראל

Hinnèh lo-yanùm ve-lò yishàn shomèr Yisra'èl

Look, He won't doze off or fall asleep, this Guardian of Israel.

תהילים קכ"ד/121v4

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

A reflection on Psalm 121.4 'As the Singer looks to the hills, where the pagan shrines are located in the high places, he knows that he has a source of help in the One who Himself made those hills, and that this One is the Lord of all the earth, and, unlike mortals, needs no sleep to refresh Him. Rather, He keeps constant vigil over His people, even while they rest.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Psalms at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

~~יְהִי הַנִּקְל לְכַתּוֹ בְּחַטָּאוֹת יַרְבְּעָם בֶּן נִבְט וַיִּקַּח אִשָּׁה אֶת אֵיזָבֵל בַּת אֶתְבַּעַל מֶלֶךְ צִידוֹנִים וַיִּלְךְ וַיַּעֲבֹד אֶת-
הַבַּעַל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לוֹ~~

~~Va-yehì hanaqèl lekhtò be-chattòt Yarobho'am ben-Nebhàt va-yiqqàch ishàh et-Izebhèl bat-
Etba'al mèlekh Tzidonim va-yèlekh ve-ya'abhòd et-ha-Ba'al va-yishtachù lo~~

And as if it wasn't enough to keep going in the sins of Jeroboam Ben-Nebhat, (Ahab) took to wife Jezebel, daughter of Etbaal, King of the Sidonians and he went and served Baal ('the Master') and worshipped him.

מלכים א טז"ל/1 Kings 16v31

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 16.31 'As the northern kingdom of Israel sinks ever deeper into godlessness, there emerges the character who will become a byword for bad kingship throughout history—Ahab. He has in tow his Sidonian wife, Jezebel, who reintroduces the cult of the 'Master' (Ba'al) into Israel. She manipulates her husband, and her name has become synonymous with evil in woman. But even now, God will not leave Himself without a witness in the apostate kingdom, and prophets speak through the mist to point to the true light.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

June 4 2017 Day 155-155 Readings 2 Samuel 22:1-23:23, Acts 2:1-47, Psalm 122:1-9, Proverbs 16:19-20

1 Kings 17:1—19:21

(Some of King David's last words).

רוח יהוה דבר-בי ומלתו על-לשוני

Rùach Adonài dibbèr-bee u-millatò al-leshonì

The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me, and His word was on my tongue

שמואל ב כג"ב/2 Samuel 23v2

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

A reflection on 2 Sam.23.2 'In the closing days of his life, King David, the 'sweet singer of Israel', acknowledges the source of the amazing creativity which has enabled his composing of songs which have endured three thousand years to be still inspired and inspiring today. It is the Spirit of the Lord who has spoken through him, giving him the words to speak. Here then we have clear testimony to the inspiration of God from the poet's mouth himself.'

οὐ γὰρ, ὡς ὑμεῖς ὑπολαμβάνετε, οὗτοι μεθύουσιν· ἔστι γὰρ ὥρα τρίτη τῆς ἡμέρας· ἀλλὰ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ εἰρημένον διὰ τοῦ προφήτου Ἰωήλ·

Ou gar, os ymìs ypolambhànete, òuti methý-ousin; èsti gar òra tríteee tees eemèras. Allà tòutò-esti to eerimènon dhià tou prophèetou Yo-èel.

(Peter is addressing the crowd on the day of Pentecost.)

'For this is not what you think, they are not drunk; after all, it's only nine o'clock in the morning. Rather, this is what was spoken about by the prophet, Joel.'

Acts/Πραξεις 2.15,16

A reflection on Acts 2.15,16 'The Jesus people were so ecstatic when the Holy Spirit came, that those hearing their outbursts of big praise had no other explanation than intoxication; but Peter takes them into another realm – heaven is breaking in, and this phenomenal event is what Israel has been waiting for for centuries – the inhabiting by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of His people, living in and speaking through them by the presence and energy of His own Spirit!'

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~ויגש אליהו אל כל העם ויאמר עד מתי אתם פסחים על ישתי הסעפים אם יהוה האלהים לכו אהריו ואם
הבעל לכו אהריו ולא ענו העם אתו דבר
Va-yiggàsh Eliyàhu el kòl ha-àm, va-yòmer, 'Ad matày atèm posehim al shtèy ha-se'ippim?
Im Adonài ha-Elohim, lekhù acharàyv, ve-ìm ha-Ba'al, lekhù acharàyv.' Ve-lò anù ha'àm
otò dabhar.~~

~~Then Elijah approached all the people and said, 'How long are you going to keep swerving from one ideology to the other? If the LORD is God, go for Him, but if it's the Master idol, Ba'al, then follow him.' But the people answered him not a word.~~

~~One Kings 18v21/כ"א י"ח~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>
A reflection on 1 Kings 18.21 'As the nation slides into apostasy, in thrall to the non-god Ba'al and its cohorts, Elijah, prophet of the Lord arises and challenges the dualistic thinking of the fickle people; 'How long are you going to keep swerving from one ideology to the other?' he asks. We are all too ready to believe that God is OK with our compromises, that His love will allow for our unfaithfulness, ignoring His call to have no other claim to our loyalty but His. Perhaps the challenging words of Elijah to Israel are all too apt for us today?'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings 17 to 19 at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
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~~**June 5 20174 Day 1566 Readings 2 Samuel 23:24-24:25, Acts 3:1-26, Psalm 123:1-4, Proverbs 16:21-23**~~

~~ויאמר המלך אל-אראונה לא כיקנו אקנה מאותך במחיר ולא אעלה ליהוה אלהי עלות
נחם ויקן דוד את-הגרון ואת-הבקר בכסף שקלים חמשים~~

~~Va-yòmer ha-mèlekh el-Aràvnah, 'Lo, ki qanò eqnèh mey-otkhà bimchìr ve-lò a'alèh
l'Adonài Elohài olòt chinnàm'; va-yiqèn David et-ha-gòren ve-èt ha-baqàr be-khèseph
sheqalim chamishim.~~

~~But the King said to Araunah, 'No, I am determined to buy it from you at full price, for I will not offer the Lord my God offerings that were free gifts to me'; and David bought the threshing-place and the cattle for fifty shegels of silver.~~

~~שמואל ב כד"כ כד"כ/24v24~~

~~A reflection on 2 Samuel 24.24 'As a response for his sin in taking an unauthorized census of God's people, which has led to plague coming on Israel, David intends to establish an altar of offering to the Lord, and chooses Aravnah the Jebusite's threshing-place for it. Aravnah, honoured to be asked, offers the land for free, but David refuses to give the Lord something that has cost him nothing. "I will not give freebies as offerings" David says. This is a provocation to us as we come to a God who needs nothing from us and yet resources us to be a blessing and a provision back to Him and to the world. Have I David's assessment when it comes to giving of my best to the Lord?'~~

ὁμοῖς ἐστε οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῆς διαθήκης ἧς διέθετο ὁ Θεὸς πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ὑμῶν, λέγων πρὸς Ἀβραάμ· καὶ ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου ἐνευλογηθήσονται πᾶσαι αἱ πατριαὶ τῆς γῆς. ὑμῖν πρῶτον ὁ Θεὸς ἀναστήσας τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν εὐλογοῦντα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἀποστρέφειν ἕκαστον ἀπὸ τῶν πονηριῶν ὑμῶν.

Ymèes-este i yee-ì ton prophetòn kai tees dhiathèekees ees dhiètheti o Theòs pros tous patèras ymòn, lègon pros Abhra'àm, 'kai en to spèrmati-sou enevloyeethèeson dai pàsai ai patriài tees yees.' Ymìn pròton o Theòs anastèesas ton pàidha avtòu Yeesòun apèstilen avtòn evloghòunda ymàs en to apostrèphin èkaston apo ton poneerìon ymòn.

(Peter is addressing the crowd after healing the lame man in the Temple)

'You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God established with our forefathers, when He said to Abraham, 'And through your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.' To you primarily, God, having resurrected His child Jesus, has sent Him to bless you by reversing each of you out of the direction your evil would take you.'

Acts 3.25,26/ Πραξεις 3.25,26

A reflection on Acts 3.25,26. 'Peter, in addressing the Jews at the Temple after the lame man's healing, makes it clear that the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah is the culmination of the story which started with Abraham and the covenant of Genesis, of the whole earth's blessing through his descendants. (Genesis 12.2-3) Jesus crowns the covenanted people of God through His risen life, deepening and widening the promise made to the patriarchs to embrace and pardon all mankind in their families and ethnicities, precisely because He is the Messiah of Israel, the Key of David who has opened what cannot now be shut.'

; 1 Kings 20–22 (see notes for readings)

~~וַיֹּאמֶר רְאִיתִי אֶת-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל נִפְצִים אֶל-הַהַרִים כַּצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר אֵין לָהֶם רֹעֵה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא אֲדֹנָיִם לְאַלְהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם~~

~~Va-yòmer, 'Ra'iti et kòl Yisra'èl nephotzim el he harim, ka tzòn ashèr cyn lahèm ro'èh, va-yomer Adonài, 'lo adonim la èyleh; yashùbhu ish le bheyto be shalom.'~~

~~And he (Micaiah the prophet) said, 'I saw all Israel driven into the hills, like sheep with no shepherd and the LORD said, 'they have no leaders; let them return each to his home in peace.'~~

~~One Kings 22v17 מלכים א כב"ז~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on 1 Kings 22.17 'King Ahab complains that the prophet of the Lord never speaks anything positive to him, and Micaiah's words about the scattering of Israel are no promise of deliverance. But as Micaiah says, he cannot say other than what the Lord gives him to say. In the event, Ahab has the opportunity to repent and seek God, but declines to do so. God's word is always for our benefit, even when it appears negative at first hearing.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings 20 to 22 at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

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June 6 2017⁷⁴ Day 157-157 Readings; 1 Kings 1:1-53, Acts 4:1-37, Psalm 124:1-8, Proverbs 16:24

ויקח צדוק הכהן את-קרן השמן מן-האהל וימשח את-שלמה ויתקעו בשופר ויאמרו כל-העם יחי המלך שלמה

Va-yiqqàch Tzaddòq ha-kohèn et-qèren ha-shèmen min ha-òhel, va-yimshàch et-Shlomòh va-yitqe'ù ba-shophàr, va-yomrù kol ha-àm, 'Yechì ha-mèlekh Shlomòh!'

And Zadok the Priest took a flask of the oil from the Tent, and anointed Solomon and had a ram's-horn trumpet sounded, and all the people said, 'Long live King Solomon!'

1 Kings 1.39/מלכים א א"ל ט

A reflection on 1 Kings 1.39 'As David's life draws to a close, political manoeuvring breaks out, with one of David's sons, Adonijah, having himself proclaimed king by the military. However, he lacks one essential factor in his planning – that it is the anointed one who carries the blessing of kingship. Through the intercession of the prophet Nathan and the priest, Zadok, David declares Solomon his successor, and it is he who is sealed with the oil from God's presence to sit on David's throne, as ancestor of the King of Kings, Jesus the Messiah, who will one day sit on His Father's throne over all rule and authority.'

1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18,19 (see notes for readings) καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἢ σωτηρία: οὐδὲ γὰρ ὄνομά ἐστιν ἕτερον ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν τὸ δεδομένον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐν ᾧ δεῖ σωθῆναι ἡμᾶς.

Kai ouk èstin en àllo oudhenì ee soteeria; oudè gar ònomà-estin èteron ypò ton ouranòn to dhedhomènon en anthròpis en o dhèe sothènai ymàs

Peter, speaking of Jesus;

And in no other is there rescue; for there is no other name given to men under the skies through which rescue can come to us.

Acts/Πραξεις 4.12

A reflection on Acts 4.12 'The Holy Spirit fills Peter – the Spirit's filling is not a one-off event, but continuous – and He is now standing up to those whom he so feared and fled a few weeks before. He is unequivocal in his message – Jesus of Nazareth is the source of their ministry, crucified at the authorities' instigation, but now alive, and in His name alone is deliverance and rescue. They have rejected the foundation stone of God's new order.'

וַיָּשֶׁב יְהוֹשָׁפָט בִּירוּשָׁלַם וַיֵּצֵא בָעַם מִבְּאֵר שֶׁבַע עַד-הַר אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּנְשִׁיבֵם אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם
Va-yèshebh Yehoshaphàt bi-Yerùshalayim, va-yashàbh, va-yetzè bha-àm mi-Be'èr Shebhà ad-hàr Ephràyim, va-yashibhèm el Adonài Elohèy abhotèyhem.

So Jehoshaphat resided in Jerusalem, and then he went out among the people from Beer-Sheba to the Ephraim hills, and he turned them back to the LORD God of their ancestors.

2-Chronicles 19v4/דברי הימים ב י"ד 4

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

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A reflection on 2-Chronicles 19.4 'Jehoshaphat's name means 'the Lord will right wise', and in his action to restore the worship of the true God to Judah, he brings the nation to a turning point. He doesn't do it by issuing an edict from Jerusalem; we are told he personally goes from the south to the north of the kingdom, bringing people back into an encounter with the God of their forefathers. As a result of this, the nation prospers and is delivered.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings 20 to 22 at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 7 2017 Day 158-158 Readings 1 Kings 2:1-3:2, Acts 5:1-42, Psalm 125:1-5, Proverbs 16:25

וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת-מִשְׁמַרְתֵּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכֵי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֵּי מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְעֲדוֹתָיו כַּכְּתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה--לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכִּיל אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה וְאֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר תִּפְנֶה שָׁם
Ve-shamàrta et-mishmèret Adonài Elohèykha la-lèkhet bi-derakhàv lishmòr chuqqotàv, mitzvotàv u-mishpatàv ve-edotàv ka-katùbh be-toràt Mosheh, le-ma'àn taskil et kol ashèr ta'asèh ve-èt kol ashèr tiphnèh sham.

(David is speaking his last instructions to his son and heir apparent, Solomon)

'And guard the commission of the Lord your God to walk in His ways, to keep to His instructions, His directives and statutes, and His narrative as recorded in Moses' Torah (life-rule) so that you will be successful in all you do and in all you undertake for yourself.'

1 Kings 2.3/ג"א ב"א מלכים

A reflection on 1 Kings 2.3 'David, giving last instructions to his son and heir apparent, Solomon, hands him the key to blessing and wholeness; 'keep the commission of the Lord your God – stick to His life-rule revealed in the Torah of Moses, and you will be successful.' By the next chapter, we find Solomon watering down his father's direction, believing he knows better - but he is no better; in fact, his departure from the Lord's ways, in spite of his sparkling reign, sets a downward course for the people of God which will end in the division of the kingdom, the destruction of the temple, and the exile of the people. The future can only be built in wholeness by carrying faithfully the story of the past and of the God whose story it is.'

εἰ δὲ ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐστίν, οὐ δύνασθε καταλῦσαι αὐτό, μή ποτε καὶ Θεομάχοι εὐρεθῆτε. ἐπέισθησαν δὲ αὐτῷ

Ee dhe ek Theou-estin, ou dhýnasthe katalýsai avtò, mèepote kai Theomàchi evrètheete, epìstheesan dhe avtò.

(Gamaliel speaking to the Jewish leaders opposing the believers.)

'If this is from God, you will not be able to destroy it; you might even find yourselves being God-fighters!' So they agreed with him.

Acts 5.40/ Πραξεις 5.40

A reflection on Acts 5.40 'Gamaliel wisely counsels the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, to leave God to be the arbiter of whether preaching in the name and by the power of Jesus is of Him or not. Two thousands years later, God is still standing by His Messiah, Jesus, answering prayer made in His name, proving that to resist Him and His Word is to be a God-fighter!'

; 2 Kings 2,4 et al (see notes for readings)

עֲתָה רוּיָן נָא לְקַרְאֲתָהּ וְנֹאמַר לָהּ הַשְּׁלוֹם לָךְ הַשְּׁלוֹם לְאִישׁךָ הַשְּׁלוֹם לְיָלְדָךְ וְנֹאמַר שְׁלוֹם

Attà ròots-na liqratah, ve-emàr lah, ‘Ha-shalòm lakh? Ha-shalòm le-ishèkh? Ha-shalòm la-yàled?’ Va-tòmer, ‘Shalòm.’

(Elisha sends Gehazi to enquire of the woman whose son has just died.)

‘Now, run and call to her, and say to her, ‘Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?’; and she said, ‘All is well.’

2 Kings 4v26/מלכים ב ד"כו

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

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A reflection on 2 Kings 4.26 ‘The response to Elisha’s enquiry of the Shunammite woman whose son has just died is inexplicable without an understanding of trust in the Lord. When asked if all is well with her and her family’s wellbeing, she responds ‘Shalom’—‘we are in wholeness.’ She is in such expectation of God’s faithfulness and bonded grace, that she cannot see things other than being well when she is in his hands.’

Read the rest of Colin’s notes on today’s reading in 1 Kings 20 to 22 at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

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And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

June 8 2014-2017 Day 159-159 Readings 1 Kings 3:3-4:34, Acts 6:1-15, Psalm 126:1-6, Proverbs 16:26-27; 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles (see notes for readings)

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ כָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁר שָׁפֵט הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּרְאוּ מִפְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי רָאוּ כִּי-חָכְמָת
אֱלֹהִים בְּקִרְבּוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט

Va-yishme’ù kol-Yisra’èl et-ha-mishpat ashèr shaphàt ha-mèlekh, va-yire’ù mipnèy ha-mèlekh, ki ra’ù ki chokhmàh Elohim be-qirbò la’asòt mishpat.

And all Israel heard of the decision by which the King (Solomon) had set things to rights, and were in awe of the King because they recognised that the wisdom of God was in him, enabling him to do the just thing.

1 Kings 3v28/מלכים א ג"כח

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

A reflection on 1 Kings 3.28 ‘The story of Solomon’s arbitration between the two prostitutes arguing over whose the baby is demonstrates the keen insight into the human heart which God had gifted to David’s son. But what is recognised is that this wisdom is God’s, the source of wisdom, who has equipped the King with the most necessary element of a successful reign.’

προσκαλεσάμενοι δὲ οἱ δώδεκα τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν εἶπον· οὐκ ἀρεστόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς καταλείψαντας τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ διακονεῖν τραπέζαις.

Proskalesàmeni dhe i dhòdheka to plèethos ton matheetòn èepon, ‘Ouk arestòn-estin eemàs katalèpsandas ton lògon tou Theòu dhiakonìn trapèzais.’

So the twelve, having called together the whole group of the disciples said, ‘It is not right for us to be leaving the word of God to wait on tables.’

Acts/ Πραξεις 6.2

A reflection on Acts 6.2 ‘It might seem at first glance as though the apostles are being haughty in their assertion that they should not wait on tables, getting involved in the fair

distribution of food to the widows. Surely they should be serving the needy? But on closer reading, we see that they are calling on those pastorally gifted to care for the church, while they give themselves, not just to poring over Scripture behind closed doors, but to publicly proclaiming Jesus as Messiah and His kingdom breaking in through signs and wonders (v.7). As a result of these wise actions, not only are the pastors released into their caring service of the believers, but the assembly of the disciples mushrooms as many, including priests, respond to the word of God proclaimed and demonstrated by the apostles. If the church ties up all God's resources in caring for herself, her growth will be stunted.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

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~~וַיָּבֹא אֵלָיו מִכְתָּב מֵאֵלֶיהוּ הַנָּבִיא לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אָבִיךָ תַחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָלַכְתָּ בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה וּבְדַרְכֵי אֲשֶׁר אָבִיךָ וּבְדַרְכֵי אֲסָא מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה~~

~~Va-yabhè elàyv mikhtàbh me-Eliyàhu ha-nabhì, leymòr, 'koh-amàr Adonài Elohèy David-abhikhà, tàchat-ashèr lo-halàkhta be-darkhèy Yehoshaphàt-abhikhà u-bhe-darkhèy Asà-mèlekh-Yehùdah~~

~~Now a letter came to him (King Jehoram of Judah) from Elijah the (late) prophet saying, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David, your ancestor, you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, nor in the ways of Asa King of Judah.'~~

~~Two Chronicles 21v12/דַּרְכֵי הַיָּמִים ב כֹּה י"ב~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

~~A reflection on 2 Chronicles 21.12 'This is one of those mysteries of Scripture; a letter written years before by the late prophet Elijah is brought to King Jehoram, upbraiding him for his refusal to follow the Lord. Was this written prophetically while Elijah was on earth, or is it a letter from the still living prophet in heaven? What we can know is that God counts it important enough to get Jehoram's attention by writing to him through one of His most famous servants to warn him of the dire consequences of his disobedience.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

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June 9 20174 Day 160-160 Readings 1 Kings 5:1-6:38, Acts 7:1-29, Psalm 127:1-5, Proverbs 16:28-30

καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κληρονομίαν ἐν αὐτῇ οὐδὲ βῆμα ποδός, καὶ ἐπηγγέλατο δοῦναι αὐτῷ εἰς κατάσχεσιν αὐτὴν καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτόν, οὐκ ὄντος αὐτῷ τέκνου.

Kai ouk èdhoken avtò kleeronomian en avtèe oudhè bhèema podhòs, kai epeengilato dhòunai avtò ees katàskesin avtèen kai to spèrmati avtòu met avtòn, ouk òndos avtò tèknou.

And while He (God) did not give him (Abraham) an inheritance in that land on which to plant his feet, He also promised to give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants after him, even though he had no children.

Acts/ Πραξεις 7.5

A reflection on Acts 7.5 ‘Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, is giving a panoramic account of the story of God’s people before the accusing witnesses against him. He reminds them here of the start of that story, in a promise to Abraham which at the time seemed preposterous, made to an old man with no land, that from him would come a people to bless the planet from a land that he would possess. God does not deal in logical assumptions and deductions; when it comes to His promise, all is by faith and seeing what cannot be seen in the natural.’

אם-יהוה לא-יבנה בית-- שוא עמלו בוניו בו
Obadiah 1-21 אם-יהוה לא-ישמר-עיר שוא שקד שומר
וְבָהָר צִיּוֹן תְּהִיָּה פְּלִיטָה וְהָיָה קִדְשׁ וְיִרְשׁוּ בֵּית יַעֲקֹב אֶת מוֹרְשֵׁיהֶם
U-bhe-hàr Tziyòn tihyèh pheleytàh ve-hayàh qòdesh ve-yorshù beyt Ya’aqòbh et
morashèyhem:

But on Mount Zion there will be rescue, and there will be holiness and the house of
Jacob will inherit their possessions.

עובדיה יז/Obadiah v17

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

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A reflection on Obadiah 17 The core of Obadiah's message is addressing the unfaithfulness of Judah's neighbour, Edom, descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau; they have not only declared independence from Judah, but are aiding their enemies.

Yet those who touch the Lord's people find He defends and vindicates them, not because of their worth or righteousness, but because of His covenant-bonded grace towards them. Their holiness is not because of their deeds, but because of His call.

In His shelter is their safe place of rescue.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in Obadiah at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

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Im Adonài lo yibhnèh bhàyt, shav amlù bhonàyv bo;

Im Adonài lo yishmòr eer, shav shaqàd shomèr.

If the Lord isn't building the house, it's a waste of the builders' labour;

If the Lord isn't guarding the city, it's futile for the watchman to stay alert.

תהילים קכז"א/Psalm 127.1

A reflection on Psalm 127.1 ‘The first verse of Psalm 127, ‘If the Lord isn't building the house, it's a waste of the builders' labour’, is abbreviated into three Latin words ‘Nisi Dominus, Frustra’ – ‘Unless the Lord - futility’ in the city motto of the Scottish capital, Edinburgh. The words were spoken over the city by the Godly covenanter leaders of the mid-seventeenth century. How true that when man expels God from his plans and efforts, all he builds is a meaningless Babel. When God is in the house, fruitfulness, hope and vision ensue.’

June 10 2017 Day 161-161 Readings 1 Kings 7:1-50, Acts 7:30-50, Psalm 128:1-6, Proverbs 16:31-33

ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ, καθὼς ὁ προφήτης λέγει· ὁ οὐρανὸς μοι θρόνος, ἢ δὲ γῆ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν μου· ποῖον οἶκον οἰκοδομησετέ μοι, λέγει Κύριος, ἢ τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου;
All'òch o ýpsistos en cheeropièetis na-èes katikì, kathòs o prophèetees lèyi, 'O ouranòs mi thrònos, ee dhe yee yporòdhion ton podhòn-mou; pion èekon eekodhomèesetè-mi, lèyi Kýrios, ee tis tòpos tees katapàvseòs-mou?'

But the Most High does not reside in hand-made temples, as the prophet says, 'Heaven is my throne, and earth the stool for my feet; what kind of house would you build for mé, says the Lord, or what place for me to rest?'

Acts/ Πραξεις 7.48

A reflection on Acts 7.48 'One of the threads which runs throughout Stephen's testimony before the hostile Council in Jerusalem involves questioning the centrality of the Temple in their worship. After all, God spoke with Abraham, Moses and Israel without any permanent structure being needed; and here, Stephen homes in on the prophecy of Isaiah 66.1, where God is looking for a heart of integrity not houses of sacrifice, for the people of God, filled with His very Spirit have become the living Temple, superceding and outgrowing the stone box in Jerusalem! In an age where our cities are littered with our own stone boxes built with hands, we must be careful not to equate church with buildings, but, as Stephen did, with the living stones of His Spirit-indwelt people. Church is always personal, never abstract.'

לֵב טוֹב אֶרְךָ אַפַּיִם מִגִּבּוֹר וּמִשָּׁל בְּרוּחוֹ מִלֶּכֶד עֵירָא—8 Kings 5—2;

Tobh èrekh-apàyim mi-gibbòr, u-moshèl be-ruchò mi-lokhèd eer

Better to be slow to anger than a warrior, and to control one's spirit than to capture a city

משלי טז"ב/לב 32 Prov.16v

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

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A reflection on Prov.16.32 'The words in the Hebrew which the writer uses here for 'slow to anger' are the same words used in God's revelation of Himself to Moses in Ex.34.6. To be slow-burning when it comes to bearing with the brokenness and failure of others is to share in the nature of God Himself, since He calls us to be as He is. '

June 11 2014-2017 Day 162-162 Readings 1 Kings 8:1-66, Acts 7:51-8:13, Psalm 129:1-8, Proverbs 17:1

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין-כְּמוֹף אֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת שָׁמַר
הַבְּרִית וְהַחֲסֵד לַעֲבָדָיִךָ הַהֲלָכִים לִפְנֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבָּם

Va-yomàr, ‘Adonài Elohèy Yisra’èl, eyn kamòkha Elohim ba-shamàyim mi-ma’al ve-àl ha-àretz mi-tàchat, shomèr ha-berit ve-ha-chèsed la-abhdèykha ha-holkhìm le-phanèkha be-khòl libbàm.’

(Solomon is praying at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem)

And he said, ‘Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below, keeping the covenant and covenant-bonded grace towards Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts.’

1 Kings 8v23/מלכים א' ח"ג כ"ג

A reflection on 1 Kings 8.23 ‘At this dedication of the Temple, Solomon sees at last fulfilled not only his own vision, but that of his late father David, who first desired to build a house where the people of God could meet Him. All of the expansive prayer and blessing which Solomon prays on this stand-out day of joy and celebration in Israel hinges on this one fact, that the Maker of heaven and earth has bound Himself by covenant, worked out in a commitment to ever-flowing grace to His people, to bless this rebel planet with His presence and glory, and to win it back to Himself as its people’s one true Lover and Rescuer.’

; 2 Kings 8 to 9 ὑπάρχων δὲ πλήρης Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἶδε δόξαν Θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦν ἐστῶτα ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ εἶπεν· ἰδοὺ θεωρῶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ἀνεωγμένους καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν ἐστῶτα τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Υπάρχων dhe plèerees Pnèvmatos Aygiou, atenisas ees ton ouranòn èedhe dhòxan Theòu kai Ieesòun estòta ek dexiòn tou Theòu kai èpen, ‘idhò theorò tous ouranòus aneogmènous kai ton Yìon tou anthròpou ek dexiòn estòta tou Theòu.’

(As Stephen is being stoned to death)

But, being sustained by the fulness of the Holy Spirit, (Stephen) fixed his eyes on the skies and saw God's glory (a visible manifestation of God's presence) and Jesus stood at the right side of God, and he said, 'Look, I can see heaven (the unseen dimension) opened up and the Son of man (the epitome of humanity) stood at the right hand of God.' Acts/Πραξεις 7.55,56

A reflection on Acts 7.55,56 ‘As Stephen’s body is breaking beneath the hail of wrath-propelled stones, spilling the red river of his witness into the dust, he remembers the words of his dying Saviour, nailed to the cross, and calls on the Lord not to count this sin against his murderers, rendering his spirit to God as His Master has done. Saul sees the last breath of this saint of God, and is glad he is gone.’

טוב פת הרבה ושלוחה-בה מבית מלא זבחי-ריב

Tobh pat charebhàh ve-shalvàh-bah, mi-bayit malè zibhchey rìv

Better a stale crust in quietness, than a house-full of festival-feasting and fighting.

משלי יז"א/Prov.17v1

A reflection on Prov.17.1 ‘ It is said that Christmas is the most likely time for families to fight. When concentration is more upon the material than the meaning, trouble ensues. The writer ~~to~~ of the Proverbs here prefers to go without the feasting ~~if~~ it means avoiding the fighting.’

June 12 2017 Day 163-163 Readings 1 Kings 9:1-10:29, Acts 8:14-40, Psalm 130:1-8, Proverbs 17:2-3

ὡς δὲ ἐπορεύοντο κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν, ἦλθον ἐπὶ τι ὕδωρ, καὶ φησιν ὁ εὐνοῦχος· ἰδοὺ ὕδωρ· τί κωλύει με βαπτισθῆναι; εἶπε δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος· εἰ πιστεύεις ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, ἔξεστιν. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπε· πιστεύω τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.

Os dhe eporèvondo katà teen odhòn, èlthon epì ti ýdhor, kai phèesin o evnòuchos, ‘Idhòu ýdhor; to kolý-ee me bhaptisthèenai?’ Èepe dhe o Philippos, ‘Èe pistèvis ex òlees tees kardias, èxestin.’ Apokrithis dhe èepe, ‘Pistèvo ton Yìon tou Theòu èinai ton Yeesùn Christòn.’

(Philip is travelling with the Ethiopian Eunuch in his chariot.)

As they continued on the road, they came across some water, and the eunuch said, ‘Look, water; what stops me being baptised?’ Then Philip said, ‘If you trust with all your heart, you can be.’ He replied, ‘I believe the Son of God to be Jesus the Messiah.’

Acts 8.36-37/ Πραξεις 8.36-37

A reflection on Acts 8.36-37. ‘This is an immense moment in the sequel to Jesus’ ministry on earth, here in the Acts of the Apostles. Philip is led by an angel to an Ethiopian eunuch, someone forbidden by the law of Moses to come into the presence of God; he finds him reading Isaiah 53, the seven centuries-old passage so clearly describing the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Philip shares the good news of the death and resurrection of Messiah, and as they see water, the heart of the eunuch leaps to respond, asking if he can get immersed with Jesus. Philip puts only one condition on this gateway into life – that the eunuch entrust himself and his life totally to following Jesus. The eunuch confesses Jesus is the Son of God, and is plunged into life and hope with God. This is why we still immerse those who confess their wholehearted trust in Jesus as Messiah today.’

יחל ישראל אל-יהוה כי-עם-יהוה החסד והרבה עמו פדות

Yachèl Yisra’èl el Adonài, ki im Adonài ha-chèsed ve-harbèh immò phedòot.

Let Israel put her trust in the Lord, for with the Lord is covenant-bonded grace and immense redemption is His.

Psalm 130.7/תהילים קל"ז

A reflection on Psalm 130.7 ‘In the midst of this Song of Ascent, sung by those going up to pilgrimage for the feasts in Jerusalem, there is expectation of pardon and forgiveness. The singers encourage each other to patiently trust God’s promises, for the Lord’s commitment to them is sealed by His covenant made with Abraham, and, as they have already seen on many occasions, He is ready to rescue them at great cost to Himself when they stray – this redemption, they sing, is immense!’

; 2 Kings 10 to 12, 2 Chronicles 22 to 23

~~**וַיִּצְאוּ אֶת-מִצְבֹּת בַּיִת הַבְּעַל וַיִּשְׂרְפוּהָ וַיִּתְּצוּ אֶת-מִצְבַּת הַבְּעַל וַיִּתְּצוּ אֶת בַּיִת הַבְּעַל וַיִּשְׂקְאוּהוּ לְמוֹצָאוֹת עַד-הַיּוֹם**~~

Va-yotzi’u et-matzbhòt beyt ha-Ba’al va-yisrephùha, va-yitetzù et-matzbhàt ha-Ba’al va-yitetzù et beyt ha-Ba’al, va-yasìmu le-motza’òt, ad ha-yòm.

~~So they brought the statues out of the Master idol, Ba'al's temple and burned them, then they broke up the main image of Ba'al and demolished its shrine, since when it has been used as a toilet, until today.~~

~~מלכים ב' י"ז כ"ו & 27/2 Kings 10v26~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

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~~A reflection on 2 Kings 10.26-27 'The living God brooks no rivals; we need to root out the non-gods that vie with Him for devotion and have no sympathy for their emotional pull. If the desecration of the shrine of Ba'al offends us, we are not getting the message of the reality of the uniqueness of the living God, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of His call on our allegiance to Him alone.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 2 Kings at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

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June 13 2013-2017 Day 164-164 Reading: 1 Kings 11:1-12:19, Acts 9:1-25, Psalm 131:1-3, Proverbs 17:4-5 Joel 1.1-3.21

וַיְהִי לַעֲת זִקְנַת שְׁלֹמֹה נָשָׂיו הָטוּ אֶת-לִבָּבוֹ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרִים וְלֹא-הָיָה לְבָבוֹ שְׁלֵם עִם-יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו כְּלִבְבַּ דָּוִד אָבִיו

Va-yehì le-èt ziqnàt Shlomò, nashàyv hittu et-lebhabhò acharèy elohìim acherìm, ve-lò hayàh lebhabhò shalèm im-Adonài Elohayv ki-lebhàbh David abhìv

And so it was that as Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart away to go after alien gods, and his heart was not wholly with the LORD his God as David his father's heart had been

מלכים א' י"ד 4/1 Kings 11v4

A reflection on 1 Kings 11.4 'Solomon, despite the gift and covenant he had received from the Lord, allowed himself to be subverted by his many wives to the worthless worship of the non-gods of other nations. Anything or anyone that draws us away from Jesus, our first love, is to be strenuously resisted and rejected, however reasonable it seems.'

'Ἀπῆλθε δὲ Ἀνανίας καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν, καὶ ἐπιθεὶς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας εἶπε· Σαοὺλ ἀδελφέ, ὁ Κύριος ἀπέσταλκέ με, Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἣ ἦρχου, ὅπως ἀναβλέψῃς καὶ πλησθῆς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου.

Apèelthe dhe Ananias kai eesèlthen ees teen ikian, kai epithèes ep-avtòn tas chèeras èepe, 'Saòul adhelphè, o Kýrios apèstalkè-me, Ieesòus o ophthèes si en tee odhò ee èerchou, òpos anablèpsis kai plesthèes Pnèvmatos Ayìou.

So Ananias arrived and went to the house, and laid his hands on him and said, 'Saul, brother, the Lord, Jesus the one who showed Himself to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me to restore your sight and so you can be filled with the Holy Spirit.'

Acts/Πραξεις 9.17

A reflection on Acts 9.17 'Ananias goes to the house and meets Saul, addressing him as 'brother'. Ananias is there to pray for Saul to be filled with the Holy Spirit, laying hands on him as Peter and John did in Samaria. This time, Ananias is not an emissary, an apóstolos of

Jesus, one of the twelve, but a regular believer. A covering falls from Saul's eyes, and he can see. He has been filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and immediately he is baptised in water, even before he eats after his three days of fasting. This communicates the importance of baptism in the early church. Saul now stays for a few days with the believers' community in Damascus.'

אם-לא שויתתי וְדוּמַמְתִּי נִפְשִׁי כְּגַמְלָל עָלַי אִמּוֹ כְּגַמְלָל עָלַי נִפְשִׁי

Im lo shiviti ve-domàmti naphshì; ke-gamùl alèy immò, ka-gamùl alày naphshì
I really have come to calm and quietened down my being; like a satisfied child with his mother, so is my being within me.
Psalm 131v2/ב"קלא תהילים

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

A reflection on Psalm 131.2 'In three short stanzas in Psalm 131, the Singer conveys a depth of rest in God which catches our breath in a sigh of peace. The image of the babe asleep on its mother's breast, sated and filled, is unique in its ability to convey to us the refuge and satisfaction found in the shelter of our loving God.'

לעג לרש חרף עשהו שמח לאיד לא ינקה

Lo-èyg laràsh chèreph osèyhu, samèach le-èyd lo yinnaqèh.
Mocking the poor insults their Maker, and rejoicing over disaster cannot be excused.
משלי יז"ה/17.5 Proverbs

A reflection on Proverbs 17.5 'Because the Lord has made every person in His own image, any disregard or insult to someone, especially someone down and out, is an insult against God; the Wise Sage here makes it clear that God will not turn a blind eye to laughing at those who have experienced suffering and loss.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Psalms at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

~~וּקְרַעוּ לְבַבְכֶם וְאַל בְּגַדֵיכֶם וּשׁוּבוּ אֶל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כִּי חַנוּן וְרַחוּם הוּא
אֲרַךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד וְנָחֵם עַל הַרְעָה
Ve-qir'ù lebhabkhem ve-lò bigdèykhem, ve-shùbhu el Adonài
Elohèykhem, ki-channùn ve-rachùm hu, èrekh apàyim ve-rabh chèsed, ve-
nichàm al ha-ra'à.~~

~~Fear your hearts, not your clothes, and come back to the LORD your God,
for He favours you and He is compassionate, slow to get angry and big on
covenant-committed grace, turning away from doing harm~~

~~מלכים ב' י"ג/13 Joel 2v13~~

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

~~A reflection on Joel 2.13 'Joel recalls Israel to their first love, reminding them of the character and nature of God revealed to Moses in Exodus 34.6-7. It is he who speaks of the promise of the immersion of God's people in His Holy Spirit which Peter quotes on the day of Pentecost; down the corridors of time, Joel sees a time of God's abiding presence coming permanently to His people.'~~

~~Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in Joel at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~And a cross-reference key at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>~~

June 14 2013-2017 Day 165-165 Readings 1 Kings 12:20-13:34, Acts 9:26-43, Psalm 132:1-18, Proverbs 17:6

;2 Kings 12,13 and 2 Chronicles 24

וַיִּעַץ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַשׂ שְׁנֵי עֲגָלֵי זָהָב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵם רַב-לְכֶם מַעֲלוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלֹף מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

Va-yiva'atz ha-mèlekh, va-ya'as shenèy eglèy zahabh, va-yòmer alèyhem, 'Rabh lakhèm mey-alòt Yerushalàyim; hinèh elohèykha Yisraèl, ashèr he'elùkha mey-èretz Mitzràyim.'

So the King (Jeroboam of Israel) conferred, and made two calves of gold, and said to them, 'It's too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; look, these are the gods of Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.'

1 Kings 12v28/חכ"ב

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

A reflection on 1 Kings 12.28 'It is hard to understand how most of Israel was misled into accepting a calf idol as their focus of worship, having experienced as a nation the powerful deliverance of the Lord and His bonded grace and love. At the division of the kingdom, here in 1 Kings 12, the northern king is interested only in keeping his separated people's allegiance, at any cost. The political drive for power means he must distract his subjects from the southern Temple. Hence, Jeroboam foists on them this meaningless non-god and the decline of the northern kingdom sets in, as the worship of the true Lord, Maker of heaven and earth, is abandoned. **Co-opted religion for political ends always perverts the glory of God.'**

καὶ ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν εἰσπορευόμενος καὶ ἐκπορευόμενος ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ παρρησιαζόμενος ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ

Kai een met'avtòn eesporevòmenos kai ekporevòmenos en Yerusalèem, kai parreesiazòmenos en to onòmati tou Kyriou Yeèsou.

And he (Paul) was coming and going with them (the apostles) around Jerusalem, emboldened in his speaking in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts/Πραξῆς 9.28

A reflection on Acts 9.28 ‘The description of the reborn Saul of Tarsus as ‘emboldened to speak’ occurs twice in a short space – once in verse 27 of his testimony in Damascus and then of his speaking in Jerusalem. The power of the Holy Spirit drives out timidity, and for Paul, it was a natural sequel to His encounter with Jesus to fearlessly declare Him as Messiah, regardless of the danger to his own person. When Jesus reveals Himself in all His glory to our lives, we cannot but speak in His name of His beauty.’

Read the rest of Colin’s notes on today’s reading in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year’s notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

עֲטָרַת זְקֵנִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וְתִפְאֶרֶת בָּנִים אֲבוֹתָם

Atèret zeqenim benèy bhanim, ve-tiphèret banim abhotàm

The crown of the old are grandchildren, and the glory of children, their parents

משלי יז"ו/17v6 Proverbs

A reflection on Prov.17.6 ‘ Parenthood forms something in human beings which nothing else does; the call to growth in character and faithfulness, the thousand small sacrifices which lay down the path to maturity for the young, all this is to be worn as a glory and, for the aged, a crown. It is a high honour and blessing indeed.’

~~וְלֹא זָכַר יוֹאָשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחֲסֵד אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוֹיָדָע אֲבִיו עִמּוֹ וַיִּהְרַג אֶת-בְּנוֹ
וַיִּמְוֹתוּ אֲמָר יִרְאָה יְהוָה וַיִּדְרֹשׁ
Ve-lò zakhàr Yo'àsh ha-mèlek ha-chèsed ashèr asàh Yehòyada abhìbh
immò, va-yaharòg et-benè u-khe-motè amàr, 'Yer Adonài ve-yidròsh.'
And King Joash did not remember the covenant commitment (chesed)
enacted toward him by Jehoiada, (Zechariah the priest's) father, but killed
his son who as he died said, 'May the LORD see this and vindicate me.'
Second Chronicles 24v22 כ"ב/22v24~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

June 15 2013-2017 Day 166-166 Readings 1 Kings 14:1-15:24, Acts 10:1-23, Psalm 133:1-3, Proverbs 17:7-8

וְהַבְּמוֹת לֹא-סָרוּ רַק לִבְב־אֲסָא הָיָה שְׁלָם עִם-יְהוָה--כָּל-יָמָיו

Ve-ha-bamòt lo sarù, raq lebhàbh Asà hayàh shalèm im Adonài kol yamàv.

Although he did not close down the high places, still Asa was wholeheartedly with the Lord all his days.

מלכים טו"ד/1 Kings 15v14

A reflection on 1 Kings 15.14 ‘Before the building of Solomon’s temple, many of Israel’s worshippers had sacrificed on hills and high places; this was to be made obsolete by the central shrine in Jerusalem. But, wedded to traditions and local practices, many people continued to do this, not only to the Lord but some to the non-gods. King Asa, grandson of Solomon and great-grandson of David removes most of the pagan practices which have plagued Israel during his father, Rehoboam’s reign in Judah, but he does not go the whole way, leaving the hill-shrines in place. In spite of this, his heart is ‘shalèm’, full and complete with the Lord and he continues in David’s ways all his life. Lord, may my heart be ‘shalèm’ for You also, united in awe of Your Name and Your ways.’

οἱ δὲ εἶπον· Κορνήλιος ἑκατοντάρχης, ἀνὴρ δίκαιος καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν Θεὸν, μαρτυρούμενός τε ὑπὸ ὄλου τοῦ ἔθνους τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἐχρηματίσθη ὑπὸ ἀγγέλου ἁγίου μεταπέμψασθαί σε εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκοῦσαι ῥήματα παρὰ σοῦ.

Ee dhe èperon, ‘Kornèelios ekatonàrchees, anèr dikaios kai phobhòumenos ton Theòn, martyroumenòs-te ypò òloo too èthnoos ton Youdhàion echreematisthee ypò angèloo ayìoo metapèmpsasthai se ees ton èekon avtòo kai akòusai rhèemata parà soo.

Then they (messengers from Caesarea) said, ‘Cornelius, a centurion, a man of integrity and in awe of God, as testified to by all of the ethnic Jews, was told by revelation from a holy angel to send for you at your house, and to hear what you have to say.’

Acts 10.22/ Πραξεις 10.22

A reflection on Acts 10.22 ‘Peter, who has just had a vision from God commanding him not to call unclean anything God has purified, is confronted by non-Jewish messengers from an officer of the Roman occupation asking him to come and speak to them about the things God has given him to share. This is a pivotal moment; an angel has spoken to a Roman soldier! God is about to turn through Peter another of the keys he has been given to the kingdom of God, to admit those who until now have been ‘aliens to the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise.’

; 2 Kings 13 to 16

וַיַּחַן יְהוָה אֹתָם וַיִּרְחַמֵם וַיִּפְּחַן אֲלֵיהֶם לְמַעַן בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וַיַּעֲקֹב וְלֹא אָבָה הַשְּׁחִיתָם וְלֹא הִשְׁלִיכָם מֵעַל פְּנֵי עַד עַתָּה

Va-yachàn Adonài otàm va-yerachamèm va-yiphèn alèyhem le-ma’àn beritò et Abhrahàm Yitzehàq ve-Yà’aqobh ve-lò abhàh ha-shechitàm ve-lò hishlikhàm me-àl panàyv ad-atàh

(God is faithful to Israel, even though they are unfaithful to Him)

And the LORD maintained favour towards them and was compassionate to them, and God has kept them in His sight because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and has not destroyed them nor dismissed them from His presence right up until today

2 Kings 13v23/ כג"ב מלכים ב

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.bluevonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.bluevonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 16 2017³ Day 167-167 Readings 1 Kings 15:25-17:24, Acts 10:24-48, Psalm 134:1-3, Proverbs 17:9-11

; Jonah 1.1-4.11, 2 Kings 13.5-6, 2 Kings 14.25-27

וַיְהִי הַנֶּקֶל לְכַתּוֹ בְּחַטָּאוֹת יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן-נִבְט וַיִּקַּח אִשָּׁה אֶת-אִיזָבֵל בַּת-אֶתְבַּעַל מֶלֶךְ צִדּוֹנִים וַיִּלְךָ וַיַּעֲבֹד אֶת-הַבַּעַל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לוֹ

Va-yehì hanaqèl lekhtò be-chattòt Yarobho'am ben-Nebhàt va-yiqqàch ishàh et-Izebhèl bat-Etba'al mèlekh Tzidonim va-yèlekh ve-ya'abhòd et-ha-Ba'al va-yishtachù lo
And as if it wasn't enough to keep going in the sins of Jeroboam Ben-Nebhat, (Ahab) took to wife Jezebel, daughter of Etbaal, King of the Sidonians and he went and served Baal ('the Master') and worshipped him.
1 Kings 16v31/ל"ו"ט"א מלכים

A reflection on 1 Kings 16.31 'As the northern kingdom of Israel sinks ever deeper into godlessness, there emerges the character who will become a byword for bad kingship throughout history – Ahab. He has in tow his Sidonian wife, Jezebel, who reintroduces the cult of the 'Master' (Ba'al) into Israel. She manipulates her husband, and her name has become synonymous with evil in woman. But even now, God will not leave Himself without a witness in the apostate kingdom, and prophets speak through the mist to point to the true light.'

καὶ ἐξέστησαν οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστοὶ ὅσοι συνῆλθον τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκκέχυται· ἤκουον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαλούντων γλώσσαις καὶ μεγαλυνόντων τὸν Θεόν. τότε ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Πέτρος· μήτι τὸ ὕδωρ κωλύσαι δύναται τις τοῦ μὴ βαπτισθῆναι τούτους, οἵτινες τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ἔλαβον καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς;

Kai exèsteesan i ek peritomèes pistì òsi synèelthon to Pètro, oti kai epì ta èthnee ee dhoreà tou Agiou Pnèvmatos ekkèchytai; èekouon gar avtòn lalòundon glòssais kai megalynòndon ton Theòn. Tòte apekrithee o Pètros, 'Mèeti to ýdhor kolýsai dhýnatài-tis tou mee bhaptisthènai tòutous, itines to Pnèvma to Àyion èlabhon kathòs kai ymèes?'

And the circumcised (Jewish) believers who had come with Peter were ecstatic that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on other nations; for they heard them speaking in unlearned languages, celebrating God. Then Peter responded, 'How can anyone refuse the water of immersion to these people, which the Holy Spirit has taken on in the same way that happened to us?'

Acts 10.45-47/ Πραξεις 10.45-47

A reflection on Acts 10.45-47 'Until this point in the story, only Jews have been plunged into the river of God's Holy Spirit, at Shavu'ot (Pentecost). Now, they are standing in a house in the HQ of the Roman occupation of Palestine, where non-Jews are worshipping God in unlearned languages, without being circumcised, without being kosher (keeping food laws) and without even having been immersed in water in Jesus' name! This moment, more than any other, is God's opening the floodgates of covenant-bonded grace for the whole world; God has broken out, not only among His people Israel, but now across the face of the planet!'

הַנָּה בָּרַכּוּ אֶת-יְהוָה כָּל-עַבְדֵי יְהוָה הַעֹמְדִים בְּבַיַת-יְהוָה בַּלַּיְלוֹת
שְׂאוּ-יְדָכֶם קִדְשׁ וּבָרַכּוּ אֶת-יְהוָה יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עֲשֵׂה שְׁמִים וְאָרֶץ

Hinèh, barkhù et-Adonai, kol-abhdèy Adonài, ha-omdìm be-bheyt Adonài ba-leylòt
Se'ù yedèykhem qodèsh u-bharkhù et-Adonài, yebharèkhekha Adonài mi-Tziyòn,
Osèh shamàyim va-àretz.

Look, bless the LORD, all servants of the LORD, standing in the house of the LORD nightly,
Lift your hands in holiness and bless the LORD; the LORD bless you from Zion,
Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 134/קלד תהילים

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
A reflection on Psalm 134 'This short song of blessing pictures for us an extending of our hands to the Lord, echoed by His hands reaching in love to us. The lifting of hands is an ancient physical expression of worship, like a little child reaching out to be picked up by its father or like the surrender of one conquered in battle. They are holy hands, yielded and forfeit to their Maker, active in the presence of God to celebrate His faithfulness. When we raise our hands, we also lift our face towards Him, open to His view, not hiding our eyes from His sight. No wonder the Singer gives us this exhortation to praise. '

Acts 11.1 Gk 6'57 Heb 0'00

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Psalms at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

משמרים הבלי-שוא חסדם יעזבו

Meshamrim haveley shàv chasdàm ya'zòvu

Those who stick with futile sham forfeit the integrity of covenant-bonded grace which could be theirs

יונה ב"ח/ח 2v8

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 17 2017³ Day 168-168 Readings 1 Kings 18:1-46, Acts 11:1-30, Psalm 135:1-21, Proverbs 17:12-13; Hosea 1.1—3.5

ויגש אליהו אל-כל-העם ויאמר עד-מתתי אתם פסחים על-שתי הסעפים אם-יהוה האלהים לכו אחריו ואם-הבעל לכו אחריו ולא-ענו העם אתו דבר

Va-yiggàsh Eliyàhu el-kòl ha-àm, va-yòmer, 'Ad matày atèm poschìm al-shtèy ha-se'ippim? Im Adonài ha-Elohim, lekhù acharàyv, ve-im ha-Ba'al, lekhù acharàyv.' Ve-lò anù ha'am otò dabhàr.

Then Elijah approached all the people and said, 'How long are you going to keep swerving from one ideology to the other? If the LORD is God, go for Him, but if it's the Master-idol, Ba'al, then follow him.' But the people answered him not a word.

1 Kings 18v21/א יח"כא

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

A reflection on 1 Kings 18.21 'As the nation slides into apostasy, in thrall to the non-god Ba'al and its cohorts, Elijah, prophet of the Lord arises and challenges the dualistic thinking of the fickle people; 'How long are you going to keep swerving from one ideology to the other?' he asks. We are all too ready to believe that God is OK with our compromises, that His love will allow for our unfaithfulness, ignoring His call to have no other claim to our loyalty but His. Perhaps the challenging words of Elijah to Israel are all too apt for us today?'

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἄρξασθαι με λαλεῖν ἐπέπεσε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὥσπερ καὶ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν ἀρχῇ. ἐμνήσθην δὲ τοῦ ῥήματος Κυρίου ὡς ἔλεγεν· Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν Πνεύματι Ἅγιῳ.

En dhe to àrxasthài me lalèen epèpese to Pnèvma to Àyion ep-avtòus òsper kai eph-eemàs en archèe. Emnèestheen dhe tou rhèematos Kyriou os èleyen, 'Ioànnees men ebhàptisen ýdhati, ymèes dhe bhaptisthèsesesthe en Pnèvmati Ayio.'

Peter recounting the Spirit's outpouring in the house of Cornelius;
'Then as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as He had originally done with us.
Then I remembered the words of the Lord when He said, 'While John immersed into water,
you however will be plunged into the Holy Spirit.'
Acts/Πραξεις 11.15,16

A reflection on Acts 11.15,16 'Suddenly, there is uproar in the room, as the Holy Spirit
rushes into the listening Gentiles, and they begin to praise and worship God in other
languages, while Peter is still speaking the message to them. The Jews are astounded at what
they are seeing – the Lord is breaking out of the national bounds, and blessing the nations, the
Gentiles! They cannot but immerse them in water in Jesus' name, since they have been
immersed in the presence of God the Spirit by sovereign intervention of the Lord. Peter
then stays on in Caesarea a few days, finding his feet in the new milieu God is creating.'

הללו-יהוה כי טוב יהוה זמרו לשמו כי נעים
Hallelù Yah, ki tobh Adonài! Zamrù li-shmò ki na'èem!
Celebrate the LORD, for the LORD is good! Set His Name to music, for it is delightful!
Psalm 135.3/גלה"ק תהלים

A reflection on Psalm 135.3 'Music and song express something transcendent of man; when
expressing the praise of his Maker, that music lets heaven into earth, changing the
atmosphere. No wonder that for centuries this delightful Name of the Lord has been sung and
played, inspiring awe and wonder in generations of His people.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings 17 to 19 at
<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at
<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
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~~וארשתיק לי לעולם וארשתיק לי בעדק ובמשפט ובחסד וברחמים~~
~~וארשתיק לי באמונה וידעת את יהוה~~
~~Ve-erasstikh li-le-olam, ve-erasstikh li-be-tzèdeq u-bhe-mishpat u-bhe-~~
~~chèsed u-bhe-rechamim, ve-erasstikh li-be-emunah, ve-yadà'ti-et-Adonài~~
~~And I will betroth you to myself forever, and I will betroth you to me with~~
~~integrity and equity, with covenant=bonded grace and with compassion,~~
~~and I will betroth you to me with faithfulness, and you will intimately~~
~~know the LORD~~

~~חושע ב"יט כ/ Hosea 2v19,20~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~June 18 2017³ Day 169-169 Readings 1 Kings 19:1-21, Acts 12:1-23, Psalm 136:1-26,~~
~~Proverbs 17:14-15~~

ואחר הרעש אש לא באש יהוה ואחר האש קול דממה דקה
Ve-achàr ha-ra'àsh, esh; lo bha-èsh Adonài. Ve-achàr ha-èsh, qol demamah, daqqah.
(Elijah is at Horeb, the mountain of God)

And after the earthquake came fire; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, a voice gently whispering.

1 Kings 19.12/מלכים א יט"ב

A reflection on 1 Kings 19.12 'To hear someone whisper, you have to be close up and intimate with them. Elijah, in fear for his life, fleeing from Jezebel after the battle on Carmel, needs to know that the Lord is not all about fire and noise; here is a moment of connection, a moment near God's face, on the mountain where God showed Himself to Moses as the favouring, compassionate and covenant-gracious Lord of all. From this moment, Elijah will recover strength and go on to a glorious finish in the chariot of fire, but for now, he needs to be wrapped in his cloak and in God's loving hand.'

καὶ ὁ Πέτρος γενόμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ εἶπεν· νῦν οἶδα ἀληθῶς ὅτι ἐξαπέστειλε Κύριος τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξείλετό με ἐκ χειρὸς Ἡρώδου καὶ πάσης τῆς προσδοκίας τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων.

Kai o Pètros yenòmenos en eavtò èepen, 'Nyn idha aleethòs òti exapèstile Kýrios ton àngelon avtòu kai exìle-tò-mé ek chèeros Eeròdhou kai pàsees tees prosdhokias tou laòu ton Ioudhàion.'

Then Peter, having come to, said 'Now I realise that Lord in fact sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from all of the plots of the Jewish establishment.'

Acts/Πραξεις 12.11

A reflection on Acts 12.11 'One thing which is so telling in terms of the authenticity of the account of Peter's miraculous release from Herod's clutches is the shock and surprise recounted by those involved in it from a human point of view. Peter thinks he is dreaming, and then 'comes to' to realise the angel has indeed freed him from jail. And Rhoda, who goes to the door when Peter knocks, is so confused that she forgets to even open the door! When God steps in, we are, like the believers praying, 'ecstatic' – taking out of the confines of our selves, realising that heaven breaks into earth when God and His messengers are at work.'

June 19 2017 Day 170 Readings 1 Kings 20:1-21:29, Acts 12:24-13:15, Psalm 137:1-9,

Proverbs 17:16

; Hosea 4.1-9.17

~~בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַפְקָדָה בָּאוּ יְמֵי הַשְׁלֵם יָדְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲוִיל הַנְּבִיא מִשְׁגַּע אִישׁ הָרוּחַ
עַל רֵב עֹנֵךְ וְרַבָּה מִשְׁטָמָה~~

~~Ba-ù yemèy ha-phequdàh, ba-ù yemèy ha-shilèm, yeda'ù Yisra'èl, evìl ha-nàbhi, meshuggàh ish ha-rùach al-ròbh avonkhà ve-rabbàh mastemàh.~~

~~The days of reckoning are coming, the days of payback, let Israel know; the prophet is called 'fool' and the man of the Spirit is called 'a madman' because of the weight of your sin and the extent of your prejudice~~

~~Hosea 9v7/הושע ט"ז~~

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 19 2013 Day 170 Reading ויאמר נבות אל-אחאב חלילה לי מיהוה מתתי את-נחלת אבתי לך

Va-yòmer Nabhòt el-Ach'abh, 'Chalilah li mey-Adonài mitìti et-nachalàt abhotài lakh.'
And Naboth said to (King) Ahab, 'The Lord forbid that I should ever give away to you my ancestors' inheritance!'

1 Kings 21.3/א"ג כא"ג מלכים א

A reflection on 1 Kings 21.3 'Because Naboth the Jezreelite stands up to the greedy and egregious King Ahab, who goes into a despicable sulk, Jezebel his queen plots to have Naboth falsely accused and killed and then grabs the land her husband wants. When violence seeks to silence integrity, God is angered. Naboth will not give up his heritage to the whim of a tyrant. God will bring a right-wising justice in the final analysis for those who show faithfulness to Him and His ways.'

λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ Κυρίῳ καὶ νηστεύοντων εἶπε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· ἀφορίσατε δὴ μοι τὸν Βαρνάβαν καὶ τὸν Σαῦλον εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ προσκέκλημαι αὐτούς.

Leetourgòndon dhe avtòn to Kyriò kai neestevòndon èepe to Pnèvma to àyion, 'Aphorìsate dhe mi ton Bharnàbhan kai ton Sàvlon ees to èrgon o proskèkleemai avtòus.'

As they were praying to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said to them 'set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have designated them to.'

Acts 13.2/ Πραξεις 13.2

A reflection on Acts 13.2 'In Luke's account, it is clearly the Holy Spirit who speaks to the praying prophets. Any doubts we have that the Holy Spirit is able to speak as a person of the Godhead are addressed by these words. It is the Holy Spirit who commissions Barnabas and Saul to their calling to take the good news of Jesus to the world. He is as worthy of Father and Son of honour and adoration.'

; Hosea 10.1—14.9, 2 Kings 14, 2 Chronicles 25-26

זָרְעוּ לָכֶם לְצִדְקָה קָצְרוּ לְפִי חֶסֶד נִירוּ לָכֶם נִיר וְעַת לְדְרוֹשׁ אֶת יְהוָה עַד יָבוֹא יוֹרָה צִדְק לָכֶם
Zir'ù lakhèm li-tzedaqàh, qitzrù le-phì chèsed, nirù lakhèm nir, ve-èt lidròsh et Adonài ad yabhò ve-yorèh tzèdeq lakhèm.

Sow for yourselves with integrity, harvest with covenant-bonded grace, plough up the fallow ground, for it's time to pursue the LORD until He comes and waters you with righteousness.

Hosea 10v12/הושע י"ב

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 20 2017³ Day 171⁴ Readings; 1 Kings 22:1-53, Acts 13:16-41, Psalm 138:1-8, Proverbs 17:17-18

Amos 1.1—4.13 ויאמר ראיתי את-כל-ישראל נפצים אל-ההרים כצאן אשר אין-להם רעה ויאמר יהוה לא-אדנים לאלה ישוּבו איש-לביתו בשלום

Va-yòmer, 'Ra'ìti et-kòl Yisra'èl nephotzim el-he-harìm, ka-tzòn ashèr eyn lahèm ro'èh, va-yomèr Adonài, 'lo adonim la-èyleh; yashùbhù ish le-bheyto be-shalòm.'

And he (Micaiah the prophet) said, 'I saw all Israel driven into the hills, like sheep with no shepherd and the LORD said, 'they have no leaders; let them return each to his home in peace.'

One 1 Kings 22v17/ז"יז כב"יז מלכים א

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>
A reflection on 1 Kings 22.17 'King Ahab complains that the prophet of the Lord never speaks anything positive to him, and Micaiah's words about the scattering of Israel are no promise of deliverance. But as Micaiah says, he cannot say other than what the Lord gives him to say. In the event, Ahab has the opportunity to repent and seek God, but declines to do so. God's word is always for our benefit, even when it appears negative at first hearing.'

γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιοθῆναι, ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται.

Gnostòn oun èsto ymìn, àndres adhelphì, òti dià tòutou ymìn àphesis amartiòn katangèletai, kai apò pàndon ón ouk ydhynètheete en to nòmo Moysèos dhikaiothènai, en tòuto pas o pistèvon dhikaiòutai.

So let it be known to you, brothers, that because of this man (Jesus), forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you and by believing in Him you are cleared of all the things that you could not be cleared of by means of the regulations of Moses.

Acts 13.38-39/ Πραξεις 13.38-39

A reflection on Acts 13.38-39 'Here we have one of the only occasions where Paul's preaching is recorded; his message to his fellow Jews is full of references to the Scriptures and their pointing to Jesus as the One to come; he even quotes the chapter number for the Second Psalm of which he speaks in verse 33. Now he comes to the crux of his message, that what the Mosaic regulations are unable to do, that is, to remove the stain of failure and sin from their lives, Jesus, by His saving death as Messiah of Israel has done for them once and for all.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 1 Kings 20 to 22 at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

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**כִּי לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה דְּבַר כִּי אִם גְּלַח סֹדוֹ אֶל עַבְדָּיו הַנְּבִיאִים
Ki lo ya-asèh Adonài Elohim dabhàr ki im galàh sodò el-abhadàyv, ha-
nebhì'im**

For the the Lord God will not do a thing unless He has revealed His counsel to His servants, the prophets.

עֲמוֹס ג'ז' / 3v7

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 21 2017³ Day 17²² Readings 2 Kings 1:1-2:25, Acts 13:42-14:7, Psalm 139:1-24, Proverbs 17:19-21

וַיִּקַּח אֶת-אֲדָרֶת אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר-נִפְלָא מֵעַלְיוּ וַיִּכָּה אֶת-הַמַּיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵיהָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ
אֶף-הוּא וַיִּכָּה אֶת-הַמַּיִם וַיַּחְצוּ הַנָּה וְהַנָּה וַיַּעֲבֵר אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Va-yiqqàch et-adèret Eliyàhu, ashèr naphlàh mé-alàyv, va-yakkèh et-ha-màyim, va-yòmer, 'Ayèh Adonài Elohèy Eliyàhu?' Aph hu va-yakkèh et-ha-màyim va-yechatzù hènna va-hènna, va-ya'abhòr Elishà.

And he (Elisha) picked up Elijah's cloak, which had fallen off him and he hit the water with it, and said, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' And having thus struck the waters, they divided in two and Elisha walked across.

2 Kings 2.14/מלכים ב' ב"ד

A reflection on 2 Kings 2.14 'Elisha has seen Elijah taken from him in a whirlwind departure and a chariot of fire. He is left on the bank of the Jordan, in silence, but with Elijah's cloak beside him. He does what he has seen Elijah do, and strikes the river with the garment, with the same result, and crosses over into his future, to be marked by twice the signs and wonders of his mentor and father. Whatever God has done in the past, He will renew His witness in every generation, for He is the God who will be known by every generation.'

גם-חשך לא-יחשיך ממך
ולילה כיום יאיר כחשיכה כאורה

Gam chòshekh lo yachskìkh mimekka,

Ve-làyla ka-yòm ya-èer, ka-chashekhàh ka-eerà.

Even darkness is not dark for You,

And the night shines like the day; darkness and light are the same to You.

Psalm 139.12/תהלים קלט"ב

A reflection on Psalm 139.12 'When we are at our darkest, these words sustain us. Darkness is no different to God from light; He still sees us clearly and holds us perfectly. It doesn't stop the darkness being dark for us, but for Him, it is as clear as day. The darkness cannot overwhelm His light. (see John 1.5) '

; Amos 5.1—7.9, 8.1—9.15

~~דַּרְשׁוּ טוֹב וְאַל רָע לְמַעַן תַּחְיוּ וַיְהִי כֵן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲתֶכֶם כְּאִשׁר אָמַרְתֶּם~~

~~Dirshù tobh ve-àl ra, le-ma'àn tichyù, vi-yehì khen Adonài Elohèy tzebha'òt itkhèm ka-ashèr amartèm~~

~~Pursue good and not evil, so that you will live, and thus the LORD God of armies will be with you, as you claim.~~

~~עמוס ה"ד/Amos 5v14~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

June 22 2017³ Day 17³³ Readings 2 Kings 3:1-4:17, Acts 14:8-28, Psalm 140:1-13, Proverbs 17:22

וַיְהִי כַמְלֵאת הַכֹּלִים וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל-בְּנֵה הַגִּישָׁה אֵלַי עוֹד כְּלִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַיהּ אֵין עוֹד כְּלִי וַיַּעֲמֵד הַשָּׁמַיִם

Va-yehi kimlòt ha-kelìm va-tomèr el-benàh, ‘Hagìshah elài od kèli’, va-yòmer elèha, ‘Ayn od kèli.’ Va-ya’amòd ha-shàmen.

So it was that when the containers were full, she said to her son, ‘Fetch me another one’ but he said to her, ‘There isn’t another one’; then the oil stopped.

2 Kings 4.6/מלכים ב ד"ו

A reflection on 2 Kings 4.6 ‘Elisha, like his mentor Elijah before him, initiates this miracle of multiplication of olive oil to rescue a prophet’s widow from having her sons enslaved to pay off their debts. It is the woman, however, who takes the action of gathering as many containers as possible, filling them with the increasing supply of oil; when she has nothing more to fill, the oil ceases. God calls us to co-operate with Him in the wonders He does, so that our faith and reliance on Him grows as He acts to transform situations by His love and power.’

παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνήγγελλαν ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς μετ’ αὐτῶν, καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξε τοῖς ἔθνεσι θύραν πίστεως.

Parayenòmeni dhe kai synagogòndes teen ekkleesìan, anèngelan òsa epì-eesen o Theòs met’avtòn, kai òti ènixe tis èthnesi thýran pìsteos.

Arriving back, then, they got the assembly of believers together and recounted to them the things God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the nations.

Acts 14.27/ Πράξεις 14.27

A reflection on Acts 14.27 ‘Barnabas and Paul return from their Turkish trip, full of stories of what God had done among the people they encountered. No longer was faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel the preserve of ethnic Jews alone; because of Messiah Jesus, all nations were now called into His covenanted family of peoples. We need to remember the power of our story to build up faith in the hearts of the community of Jesus ; God’s wonders are not for our private benefit, but for the glory of His Name.’

Amos 7.10-17, 2 Kings 14.28-29, 15.8-18, 2 Chron. 26.16-21

~~בְּיָת אֵל לֹא תוֹסִיף עוֹד לְהִנָּבֵא כִּי מִקְדָּשׁ מֶלֶךְ הוּא וּבֵית מַמְלָכָה הוּא~~

~~U-bhey't Èl lo tosi'ph od le hinnabhè, ki miqdàsh mèlekh hu u bhèyt mamlakhàh hu~~

~~As for Bethel, don't prophesy there any more, because it is the king's sanctuary and property of the state.~~

~~Amos 7v13/עָמוֹס ז"ג~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

June 23 2017³ Day 17⁴⁴ Readings 2 Kings 4:18-5:27, Acts 15:1-35, Psalm 141:1-10, Proverbs 17:23

עַתָּה רוּץ-נָא לְקִרְאָתָהּ וְאָמַר-לָהּ הַשְּׁלוֹם לְךָ הַשְּׁלוֹם לְאִישׁךָ הַשְּׁלוֹם לְיֶלֶד וְתֹאמַר שְׁלוֹם
Attà ròots-na liqratàh, ve-emàr-lah, ‘Ha-shalòm lakh? Ha-shalòm le-ishèkh? Ha-shalòm la-yàled?’ Va-tòmer, ‘Shalòm.’

(Elisha sends Gehazi to enquire of the woman whose son has just died.)
‘Now, run and call to her, and say to her, ‘Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?’ ; and she said, ‘All is well.’

מלכים ב ד"כ/2 Kings 4v26

A reflection on 2 Kings 4.26 ‘The response to Elisha’s enquiry of the Shunammite woman whose son has just died is inexplicable without an understanding of trust in the Lord. When asked if all is well with her and her family’s wellbeing, she responds ‘Shalom’ – ‘we are in wholeness.’ She is in such expectation of God’s faithfulness and bonded grace, that she cannot see things other than being well when she is in his hands.’

ויאמר משרתו מה אתן זה לפני מאה איש ויאמר תן לעם ויאכלו--כי כה אמר יהוה אכל והותר

Va-yòmer meshartò, ‘Mah etèyn zeh liphnèy mé’ah ish?’; va-yòmer, ‘Ten la-àm ve-okhèylu, ki koh amàr Adonài, akhòl ve-hotèr’

And (Elisha’s) servant said, ‘What! Am I to give just this to the hundred men?’ and (Elisha) said, ‘Give it to the people; they will eat and there will be some left over.’

מלכים ב ד"מג/2 Kings 4.43

A reflection on 2 Kings 4.43 ‘We readily connect the miracles of multiplication of bread with Jesus in the New Testament, but, in this chapter in 2 Kings recording the wonders done through Elisha, there is found the Bible’s first such miracle, here of twenty loaves feeding and satisfying a hundred hungry men, with some left over. So when Jesus feeds five thousand with a little food, His Jewish audience would connect His actions with the prophets of old, a sign that He is the continuation of God’s story of love for His people Israel.’

וירד ויטבל בירדן שבע פעמים כדבר איש האלהים וישב בשרו כבשר נער קטן ויטהר
Va-yèred va-yitbòl ba-Yardèn shevà pe-amim ki-debhàr ish ha-Elohìm va-yashàbh besarò ki-bhesar na’àr qatòn va-yit-hàr.

And he (Naaman) went down and immersed himself in the Jordan seven times according to the word of the man of God and his skin was restored to that of a little child and he was clean.

מלכים ב ה"יד/2 Kings 5v14

A reflection on 2 Kings 5.14 ‘Elisha’s last request of Elijah before he ascends in the fiery chariot is for a double measure of the Spirit that is upon him, and Elisha’s ministry sees twice the miracles and wonders of Elijah’s. The Lord’s plan is for His wonders to extend, not contract. Here with Naaman the Syrian, the scope of God’s healing power is extended beyond the Jewish nation; Elisha is walking into the promise made to Abraham of God’s people being a blessing to the nations, heaven materialising through them on the earth. That promise still stands.’

;Isaiah 1.1-26, 2.6-18, 3.8-4.1, 5.1-23, 32.9-11 ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ πιστεύομεν σωθῆναι καθ’ ὃν τρόπον κάκεινοι.

Allà dhià tees chàritos tou Kyriou Ieesou pistèvomen sothènai kath’òn tròpon kakèni.

But through the grace of the Lord Jesus we believe we shall be rescued, the same way they are.

Acts/Πραξεις 15.11

A reflection on Acts 15.11 'A meeting takes place of the twelve and the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. Peter, as the one who first took the good news of Christ to the Gentiles, points out that the Lord has poured out the Holy Spirit on the non-Jews with no qualification needed – in fact, their hearts have been purified (like being circumcised?) by faith, not by a physical action. He objects to the placing of burdensome requirements on the Gentiles which even the Jews don't manage to fulfil. Peter then makes the key statement, which Paul also takes up in his writings, 'We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.' He is saying, then, that even as Jews, the obedience to the law is not what makes them fit for God, but the chesed-grace of God's covenant action in Christ.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in Obadiah at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

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צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּט תִּפְדָּה וְשָׂרָהּ בְּצִדְקָה

Tzi yòn be mishpàt tipadèh, ve-shavèhah bi-tzedaqàh

Zion will be redeemed with equity, and her returnees with righteousness.

ישעיהו א"ד/14

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 24 2017³ Day 17⁵⁵ Readings 2 Kings 6:1-7:20, Acts 15:36-16:15, Psalm 142:1-7, Proverbs 17:24-25

וַיִּתְּפַלֵּל אֵלִישָׁע וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה פָּקַח-נָא אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיִּרְאֵה וַיִּפְקַח יְהוָה אֶת-עֵינָיו הַנֶּעַר וַיִּרְאֵה
וַהֲנִה הֵהָר מֵלֵא סוּסִים וְרֶכֶב אֲשֶׁר סָבִיבַת אֵלִישָׁע

Va-yitpalèl Elishà, va-yomàr, 'Adonài peqàch-na et-eynàvv ve-yir'èh', va-yiphqàch Adonài et-eynèy ha-nà'ar, va-yàr, ve-hinèh, ha-hàr malè susìm ve-rèkhebh esh sebhìbhòt Elishà. And Elijah prayed, saying, 'Lord, open his eyes and let him see', so the Lord opened the boy's eyes and he saw, and there it was - the hillslopes packed with horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Kings 6v17/ז"יז מלכים ב

A reflection on 2 Kings 6.17 'Just at the moment when all seems so dark for Israel, and the Syrians are massed against them, Elisha asks the Lord to let his young attendant see into the unseen realm to view things from the Lord's vantage point. At that moment, the young man envisions the hosts of God around them, and sees that the Lord's strength is not compromised by the army of Syria. 'Don't be afraid' says Elisha in v.16, 'there are more with us than with them.' We need not be shackled to the human outlook when the Holy Spirit shows us heaven's perspective and the goodness of the Lord, who has all our circumstances in His hand.'

καί τις γυνή ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων, σεβομένη τὸν Θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἧς ὁ Κύριος διήνοιξε τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου.

Kai tees yinèe onòmati Lydhìa, porphyròpolis pòleos Thyatèron, sebhomènee ton Theòn, èekouen ees o Kýrios dhiènenixe teen kardhian prosèchin tis lalouménis ypò tou Pàvlou. And one woman named Lydia, a purple-seller from the town of Thyatira, reverent toward God, listened and the Lord opened up her heart to accept the things Paul was saying. Acts 16.14/ Πραξεις 16.14

A reflection on Acts 16.14 'It surely is of note that, although in Acts 16.9 it is the vision of a man calling Paul over to Macedonia, the first European to respond to the good news of Jesus is a woman, and a woman of means at that. The good news of Jesus is good news for men but particularly for hitherto closeted women; just as Jesus entrusted to His sister-followers the first telling of His resurrection to the brothers, now Lydia is the pioneer of believers in this new phase of the sequel to Jesus' ministry; she is not any second-class disciple here. She is the convenor of the first gathering of believers on the European continent!'

; Isaiah (see notes for details.)

וַקְרָא זֶה אֶל-זֶה וַאֲמַר קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ

Ve-qaràh zeh el-zèh ve-amàr, 'Qadòsh, Qadòsh, Qadòsh, Adonài Tseva'òt, melè-khol-ha-àrets-kebhodè'

And each one called to the other and said

'Holy, holy, holy, the Lord of armies, all the earth is full of His glory'

ישעיהו ו"ג/6v3

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 25 2017³ Day 1766 Readings 2 Kings 8:1-9:13, Acts 16:16-40, Psalm 143:1-12, Proverbs 17:26; Micah 1.1-2.13

ויקם ויבא הביתה ויצק השמן אל-ראשו ויאמר לו כה-אמר יהוה אלהי ישראל משחתך למלך אל-עם יהוה אל-ישראל

Va-yaqàm, va-yabhòh ha-bàytah, va-yitzòq ha-shèmen el-roshò, va-yòmer lo, 'Koh amàr Adonài Elohèy Yisra'èl, meshachtikha le-mèlekh el-àm Adonài, el Yisra'èl.'

(Elisha sends a prophet to consecrate Jehu king in secret.) And (the young prophet) got up and went into the house, and poured the oil on his head, and said, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, I have consecrated/anoointed you king over the people of the LORD, Israel.'

2 Kings 9v6/ט"ו מלכים ב

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>
A reflection on 2 Kings 9.6 'The Lord anoints whom He will to kingship, in spite of the machinations of man. As Israel continues her descent into idolatry and degradation, Elisha commissions one of the school of prophets to anoint Jehu King in secret. Jehu exacts terrible retribution on the house of Ahab, including the horrible demise of Jezebel. 'God is not mocked' says Paul much later, 'Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.'

Κατὰ δὲ τὸ μεσονύκτιον Παῦλος καὶ Σίλας προσευχόμενοι ὕμνουν τὸν Θεόν· ἐπηκροῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ δέσμοι.

Katà dhe to mesonyktion Pàvlos kai Silas proseuchòmenoi ýmnoun ton Theòn; epeekro-òndo dhe avtòn i dhèsmiee.

Then around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying, singing songs of God; and the prisoners were listening to them.

Acts 16.25/ Πραξεις 16.25

A reflection on Acts 16.25 'Paul and Silas are in prison unjustly. As Roman citizens, they should have been tried first. But even in the midst of the injustice, they fix their hearts on the Lord and celebrate His love, singing aloud in the middle of the night, their feet in the stocks. They are about to be miraculously released and will lead their gaoler and his family into life in Christ before the dawn breaks. But for now, their hearts are focussed and full of hope and expression in the Spirit, in spite of their bonds. Joy and justice will come in the morning.'

הַשְּׁמִיעֵנִי בַבֶּקֶר חֲסֵדְךָ -- כִּי-בֶרֶךְ בַּטַּחְתִּי הוֹדִיעֵנִי דְרָךְ-זוֹ אֱלֹהִים -- כִּי-אֵלֶיךָ נִשְׁאַתִּי נַפְשִׁי
Hashmi'èyni bha-bòqer chasdèkha, ki bhekhà bhataçhti; hodi'èyni dèrekh zu eylèykh, ki elèkha nasàti naphshi.

Let me hear of Your covenant-bonded grace in the morning, for I trust in You; let me know the way I should go, for I am bringing my life to You.

Psalms 143.8/ תהילים קמ"ח

A reflection on Psalm 143.8 'The Singer of Israel says his heart is desolate, but in the midst of his turmoil, He listens for the sure word of the self-sacrificial, covenant-bonded grace, the 'chesed' of the Lord, which has been promised to him, the only certain thing in a sea of trouble. Directing his whole being towards the One who is His source, he asks to know direction and the way he should go, expecting to find it, because God cannot be untrue to His own word and Name.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's reading in 2 Kings at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

And a cross-reference key at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

(Micah expresses the LORD's unhappiness with false prophets)

לוֹ-אִישׁ הִלֵּךְ רוּחַ וְשִׁקְרָה כִּזְבֵּב אֶטְף לָךְ לַיִן וְלִשְׂכָר וְהִיא מִטִּיף הָעַם הַזֶּה

Lu-ish holèkh rùach va-shèqer, kizzèbh attiph lekhà la-yàyin ve-la-

shekhàr, ve-hayàh mattiph ha-àm ha-zèh

~~If someone comes to you full of wind and rubbish, burbling lying promises to you about wine and liquor, he somehow turns into a guru for this people~~

~~מיכה ב"א/11~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~June 25 2013 Day 176 Reading; Micah 1.1-2.13~~

~~(Micah expresses the LORD's unhappiness with false prophets)~~

~~לוֹ-אִישׁ הִלֵּךְ רוּחַ וְשִׁקָּר כִּזְבֹּב אֶטֶף לְךָ לִיַיִן וְלִשְׂכָר וְהָיָה מְטִיף הָעַם הַזֶּה~~

~~Lu-ish holèkh rùach va-shèqer, kizzèbh attiph lekha la-yàyin ve-la-shekhàr, ve-hayàh mattiph ha-àm ha-zèh~~

~~If someone comes to you full of wind and rubbish, burbling lying promises to you about wine and liquor, he somehow turns into a guru for this people~~

~~מיכה ב"א/11~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~Find the whole year's notes at~~

~~<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>~~

~~June 26 2017³ Day 177⁷ Readings 2 Kings 9:14-10:31, Acts 17:1-34, Psalm 144:1-15, Proverbs 17:27-28~~

~~וַיֵּצְאוּ אֶת-מַצְבֹּת בֵּית-הַבַּעַל וַיִּשְׂרְפוּהָ וַיִּתְצוּ אֶת מִצְבַּת הַבַּעַל וַיִּתְצוּ-אֶת-בֵּית הַבַּעַל וַיִּשְׂמְהוּ לְמוֹצְאוֹת עַד-הַיּוֹם~~

~~Va-yotzi'u et-matzbhòt beyt ha-Ba'al va-yisrephùha, va-yitetzù et matzbhàt ha-Ba'al va-yitetzù et beyt ha-Ba'al, va-yasìmu le-motza'òt, ad ha-yòm.~~

~~So they brought the statues out of the Master-idol, Ba'al's temple and burned them, then they broke up the main image of Ba'al and demolished its shrine, since when it has been used as a toilet, until today.~~

~~2 Kings 10v26 & 27/כו~~

~~A reflection on 2 Kings 10.26 -27 'The living God brooks no rivals; we need to root out the non-gods that vie with Him for devotion and have no sympathy for their emotional pull. If the desecration of the shrine of Ba'al offends us, we are not getting the message of the reality of the uniqueness of the living God, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of His call on our allegiance to Him alone.'~~

~~διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εὗρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο, Ἄγνώστῳ Θεῷ. ὃν οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, τοῦτον ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν.~~

~~Dhierchòmenos gar kai anatheoròn ta sebhàsmata ymòn, èvron kai bhomòn en o epeyègrapto, 'Agnòsto Theò': on oun agnoòntes evsebhèete, tòuton egò katangèlo ymìn.~~

~~Paul speaks to the Athenians:~~

~~For as I walked about, I saw your religiosity, even finding a shrine on which was written, 'To An Unknown God': so that which you are venerating in ignorance, I now present clearly to you.~~

~~Acts/Πραξαις 17.23~~

~~A reflection on Acts 17.23 'The most striking thing about Paul's address to the Athenians is that he speaks to them on their cultural plane. He acknowledges their religion, and their search for spiritual reality. He uses the 'unknown god' inscription as a bridge into sharing his~~

heart with them, and wants them to know that this is no other than the One True God, who made everything. In some ways, this is familiar territory to the Athenians, for they would know the teachings of Plato on the idea of one god.'

אֲשֶׁר בְּנֵינוּ כְּנֹטְעִים-- מְגַדְלִים בְּנִעוּרֵיהֶם בְּנוֹתֵינוּ כְּזֵית-- מִחֲטָבוֹת תְּבִנִית הַיֶּכֶל
Ashèr banèynu kinti'im megudalim binurèyhem, benotèynu khe-zaviyòt mechutabhòt tabhnit heykhàl.

May our sons become mature plants in their youth, and our daughters, crafted cornerstones, like those of a palace.

תהילים קמד"ב/12

A reflection on Psalm 144.12 'The Singer here blesses the generation to come, and prays for their maturity, beauty and glory as they know the Lord's transforming power to rescue. The blessing and forming of the young is a key indicator of the health of a civilisation, the message sent through the generations to the future.'

גַּם אֵוִיל מִחֲרִישׁ חָכָם יִחְשַׁב אֶטֶם שְׁפִתָיו נָבוֹן
Gam evìl macharìsh chakhàm yechashèbh; otèm sphotàyv nabhòn
Even a fool staying silent sounds wise; Keeping lips still speaks discernment
משלי יז"כח/28

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross-reference key at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>
A reflection on Prov.17.28 'When a fool stays silent, he sounds like a wise man'; in a world where there are trillions of words written and spoken on the planet every day, all looking to be received, read or heard, it is sobering to consider the power of silence in its season as one of the most eloquent communications we can express.'

Read the rest of Colin's notes on today's readings in Proverbs at
<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at
<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>
And a cross-reference key at
<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/crossreflist.pdf>

~~וְחָלְכוּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ לָכֵן וְנִעְלָה אֶל-הַר יְהוָה וְאֶל-בַּיִת אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְעָקֹב
וְיִזְרְנוּ מִדְּרָכָיו וְנִלְכֹּחַ בְּאַרְחֹתָיו כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תּוֹרַת דְּבַר יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם
Ve-halkhù goyim rabbim ve-omrù, 'Lekhù, ve-na'aleh el-hàr Adonài ve-el-
bèyt Elohèy Ya'aqòbh ve-yorènu mi-derakhàyv ve-nelkhàh be-orchotàyv,
ki mi-Tziyòn tetzèh toràh u-debhàr Adonài mi-Yerushalàyim.'
And many nations will travel, saying, 'Come on, let's go to the LORD's hill
and to the house of the God of Jacob and let's learn His ways and walk in
His paths, for from Zion will go out the Torah rule of life and the word of
the LORD from Jerusalem (city of peace).'~~

מִיְכָה ד"ב/2

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>
Find the whole year's notes at
<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

June 27 2017 Day 178-178 Readings 2 Kings 10:32-12:21, Acts 18:1-22, Psalm 145:1-21, Proverbs 18:1

εἶπε δὲ ὁ Κύριος δι' ὀράματος ἐν νυκτὶ τῷ Παύλῳ· μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀλλὰ λάλει καὶ μὴ σιωπήσης, διότι ἐγώ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιθήσεται σοὶ τοῦ κακῶσαι σε, διότι λαὸς ἐστὶ μοι πολὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ.

Ἐπερθε ο Κύριος dhi'oràmatos en nykti to Pàvlo, 'Mee phobhòu, allà làlee kai mee siopèesees, dhiòti egò-eemi metà sou, kai oudhèes epithèesatai si tou kakòsai-se, dhiòti la-òs estì mi polýs en tee pòlee tàvtee.'

Then the Lord spoke through a dream in the night to Paul, 'Don't be afraid, but speak out and don't keep quiet, for I am with you and no one will be able to attack and hurt you, for I have many people in this city.'

Acts/Πραξεις 18.9,10

A reflection on Acts 18.9,10 'In the midst of opposition to the good news of the Messiah, the Lord speaks to Paul in a dream and urges him not to keep quiet about Jesus, but to speak out and let the story be known, because there are many still to come to know Him in Corinth. If we soft-pedal the saving grace of God because we fear offending others, we will be depriving the world of the one hope they have to hear of their Maker's love and provision of life unlimited for them. As He called to Paul, so the Lord calls to us who still follow Him, 'Don't be afraid and don't keep quiet, for there are many still to come to the Rescuer and His transformative power.'

מי אל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעִבֵר עַל-פְּשַׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נִחְלָתוֹ לֹא הִחְזִיק לְעַד אֲפֹן כִּי חָפַץ מִיֶּסֶד הוּא

Mi El ka mòkha , nossè' avòn ve-obhèr peshà' lisherit nachaltò lo-he cheziq la-àd appò ki chàphets chèsed hu

Who is a God like you, bearing sin and covering failure to the remnant of his inheritance? He does not nurture his anger for always, for he delights in covenant commitment

מיכה ז"יח/7v18

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at

<http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

Malkhutkhà malkhùt kol-olamim, u-memshaltkhà bekhòl dor va-dòr

Your kingship is a kingship that goes on without limit, and Your government through all generations.

Psalm 145.13/תהילים קמה"ג

A reflection on Psalm 145.13 'The Hebrew word the Singer of Israel uses here is not the word meaning a geographical area ruled over by a king (mamlakhàh), but the quality of the King's action, His Kingship. The Kingship of God is not restricted to a place or time, but is present throughout space and the ages and overrules all other power. No wonder, then, that the Messiah, Jesus, in the version used by Hebrew-speaking New Testament readers comes announcing the arrival of the 'kingship of God', which will transform the earth in the release of heaven's presence in its midst.'

לתאווה יבקש נפרד בכל-תושיה יתגלע

Le-ta'avàh yebhakèsh niphràd, be-khòl tushiyah yitgalà

Because of greed, people seek to separate themselves, in opposition to all good sense.

Proverbs 18.1/א"ח משלי

(For the record, Proverb of the day the Monday after the UK voted to part from the EU in 2016; I had never noticed this before...)

A reflection on Proverbs 18.1 'When someone cuts themselves off in self-protective greed, they close their ears to good sense, the Sage says. Just like the fool who built bigger and bigger barns in the parable of Jesus, selfishness leads to great loss and disconnection between people.'

June 28 2016/3 Day 180-179 Readings 2 Kings 13:1-14:29, Acts 18:23-19:12. Psalm 146:1-10, Proverbs 18:2-3

ויחן יהוה אתם וירחמם ויפן אליהם למען בריתו את-אברהם יצחק ויעקב ולא אבה השחיתם ולא-השליכם מעל-פניו עד-עתה

Va-yachàn Adonài otàm va-yerachamèm va-yiphèn alèyhem le-ma'àn beritò et-Abhrahàm Yitzchàq ve-Yà'aqobh ve-lò abhàh ha-shechitàm ve-lò hishlikhàm me-àl panàyv ad-atàh (God is faithful to Israel, even though they are unfaithful to Him)

And the LORD maintained favour towards them and was compassionate to them, and God has kept them in His sight because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and has not destroyed them nor dismissed them from His presence right up until today

2 Kings 13v23/כג"ב יג"ב מלכים

A reflection on 2 Kings 13.23 'In spite of Israel's rank adultery with the non-gods of the pagans, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob maintains His covenant-bonded grace and visceral compassion towards them. This is because He has vowed by His integrity to be true to Himself. He is not in a contract with His people, but an unconditional love-bond which cannot ever be rescinded, however the people of God renege on their part. No wonder Israel's song has ever been 'give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, and His covenant-bonded grace has no limits.'

εἶπέ πρὸς αὐτούς· εἰ Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες; οἱ δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν· ἄλλ' οὐδὲ εἰ Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον ἔστιν ἠκούσαμεν.

Èepe pros avtòus, 'ee Pnèvma Àyion elàbhetè pistèvsandes?'; ee dhe pros avtòn, 'All'oudhè ee Pnèvma Àyion èstin eekòusamen.'

(Paul speaking to the Ephesian new believers, after Apollos had preached to them;)

He said to them, 'Did you accept the Holy Spirit when you believed?' ; so they said to him, 'But we've never heard there is such a thing as the Holy Spirit.'

Acts/Πραξεις 19.2

A reflection on Acts 19 .2 'When Paul meets up with the small group of believers whom Apollos has trained and mentored, Paul asks after their encounter with the Holy Spirit. They seem to be asking, 'The Holy Who?' – they have not been introduced to Him. The baptism they have received is John's baptism for forgiveness, but this has not imparted to them the

full experience of the living God in receivable form. The Ephesian believers are then immersed in water in Jesus' name, and laying his hands on them, Paul is delighted to witness them then being immersed by Him in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and prophesying, about a dozen of them together.'

אל-תבטחו בנדיבים-- בבן-אדם שאין לו תשועה תצא רוחו ישב לאדמתו ביום ההוא
אבדו עשתנתיו אשרי--שאל יעקב בעזרו שברו על-יהוה אלהיו
Al tibhtechù bhindibhìm, be-bhèn adàm she-èyn lo teshuàh; teytzèh ruchò yashùbh le-admatò
ba-yòm ha-hù abhdù eshtonotàv. Ashrèy she-Èl Ya'aqòbh be-ezrò, shibhrò al-Adonài
Elohàyv.

Don't put your confidence in rulers or in humankind, for there is no salvation in them; their breath will leave them, and they return to the earth and on that day, their plans fall. How fulfilled are those whose aid comes from the God of Jacob, whose expectation is of the Lord their God.

תהילים קמו"ג ד ה/5-146.3 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 146.3-5 'On days when human systems of self-organisation reveal their fragility and fallibility, the words of the Singer of Israel remind us that there is only one source of rescue and certainty, the Lord God of Jacob. Human leaders come and go with rapid regularity, but the dependability of the Maker of heaven and earth is unlimited.'

~~וַיַּעַר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת רוּחַ פּוּל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וְאֶת רוּחַ תִּלְגַּת פִּלְנֶסֶר מֶלֶךְ
אַשּׁוּר וַיִּגְלֵם לְרֵאשִׁיטוֹ וְלַגְדֵי וְלַחֲצֵי שֶׁבֶט מְנַשֶּׁה וַיְבִיאֵם לְחֵלַח וְחַבּוֹר וְהָרָא
וְנָהָר גּוֹזָן עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה~~

~~**Va-ya'ar Elohey Yisra'el et ruach Pul mèlekh Ashùr ve-èt ruach Tilgàt
Pilnèser mèlekh Ashur va-yaglèm la-Re'ubhèni ve-la-Gadì ve-la-chàtzi
shèbhet Menassèh va-yebhì'em la-Chelàch ve-Chabhòr ve-Harà u-nehàr
Gozàn ad ha-yòm ha-zèh**~~

~~**And the God of Israel provoked the spirit of Pul and the spirit of Tilgat-
pilnèser, kings of Assyria and they exiled the Reubenites, the Gadites and
the half-tribe of Manasseh, and carried them off to Helach and Habor and
Hara, as far as the River Gozan, where they remain to this day:**~~

~~**דברי הימים א ה' כו/1-Chronicles 5v26**~~

~~Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>~~

~~**June 29 201673 Day 181-180 Readings 2 Kings 15:1-16:20, Acts 19:13-41, Psalm 147:1-20, Proverbs 18:4-5**~~

וילך המלך אחז לקראת תגלת פלאסר מלך-אשור דומשק וירא את-המזבח אשר
בדמשק וישלח המלך אחז אל-אוריה הכהן את-דמות המזבח ואת-תבניתו--לכל-מעשהו
Va-yèlekh ha-mèlekh Achàz liqràt Tìglat Pilèser, mèlekh Ashùr, Dumèseq, va-yàr et-ha-
mizbè-ach ashèr be-Damàseq, va-yishlàch ha-mèlekh Achàz el-Uriyàh ha-kohèyn et-demùt
ha-mizbè-ach ve-et tabhnitò le-khòl ma'asèyhu.

Then King Ahaz (of Israel) went to visit King Tiglat-Pileser of Assyria at Damascus, and saw there the Damascan altar; then King Ahaz sent to Urijah the Priest a picture of the altar, and its dimensions with all its assembly details.

מלכים ב טז"א/2 Kings 16.10

A reflection on 2 Kings 16.10 'In case we are shocked that King Ahaz of Israel should be importing plans for a pagan altar, we need to remember that in his era, Israel as a nation has

already abandoned the worship of the Lord at Jerusalem to sacrifice before calf-idols at Dan and Bethel. The further Israel gets from the heart of God and His covenant with them, the more misled their actions; their apostate king is now into designer, do-it-yourself religion, impressed by the artefacts of the very ruler whose armies are about to crush his wayward nation.'

πολλοί τε τῶν πεπιστευκότων ἦρχοντο ἔξομολογούμενοι καὶ ἀναγγέλλοντες τὰς πράξεις αὐτῶν. ἱκανοὶ δὲ τῶν τὰ περίεργα πραξάντων συνενέγκαντες τὰς βίβλους κατέκαιον ἐνώπιον πάντων· καὶ συνεψήφισαν τὰς τιμὰς αὐτῶν καὶ εὗρον ἀργυρίου μυριάδας πέντε.

Polli te ton pepistevkòton èrchondo exomologòumeni kai anangèllondes tas pràxis avtòn. Ikanì dhe ton ta perìerga praxàndon synenenkandes tas bhìbhulous katèkaion enòpion pàndon' kai synepsèephisan tas timàs avtòn kai èvron argyriou myriàdhas pènde.

(The Ephesians turn to Christ.)

Many of those who had believed came and professed faith, renouncing their former practices. Some of them who had practiced the occult publicly burned their books; when they calculated the value of them, they found it was fifty thousand silver coins.

Acts 19.18-19/ Πραξεις 19.18-19

∴ Isaiah 7.1-9.21

כִּי-יֵלֵד יוּלַד לָנוּ בֶן נַתַּן לָנוּ וְתַהִי הַמִּשְׁרָה עַל שִׁכְמוֹ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פְּלֵא וְיִעַץ אֶל גְּבוּרֶךָ אָבִי עַד שָׁר שְׁלֹמֹם

Ki-yèled yulàd lanù, ben nittàn lanù, va-tehì ha-misràh al-shichmò, va-yiqrà shemò Pèle; Yo-ètz; El-Gibbòr; Avì ad; Sar-Shalòm

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us, and the government will rest on his shoulder, and his name will be called;

Miraculous; Mentor; God of Might; Father forever; Ruler of Complete Peace

Isaiah 9v5/ט"ה/ה'5v9

Read today's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Daily1.pdf>

Find the whole year's notes at <http://www.colinsymes.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheStory.pdf>

A reflection on Acts 19.18-19 'When the reality of Jesus' presence by the power of Spirit shows up, no other claim to spiritual authority can survive. The story is told of Ceofi, pagan high priest of King Edwin of Northumbria, who in 627ad confessed that the old religion of the Angles which he had served had never yielded any benefit, and he went from the king's presence to desecrate the shrine of his non-gods, confessing Christ to be the one true God. In the account here of the Ephesian awakening, things once priced as precious lost all value in the light of the Pearl of Great Price, Jesus, beside whom nothing can be measured.'

June 30 201673 Day 182-181 Readings 2 Kings 17:1-18:12, Acts 20:1-38, Psalm 148:1-14, Proverbs 18:6-7.

בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּטַח וְאַחַרָיו לֹא-הָיָה כָמוֹהוּ בְּכָל מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאַשֶׁר הָיוּ לְפָנָיו
B'Adonài Elohèy Yisra'èl batàch, ve-acharàyv lo-hayàh khamòhu be-khòl malkhèy Yehudàh
va-ashèr hayù le-phanàyv

Written about Hezekiah, King of Judah:

In the LORD God of Israel he trusted, and after him there was none like him of all the kings of Judah, nor of those who had been before him.

ἀλλ' οὐδενὸς λόγου ποιῶμαι οὐδὲ ἔχω τὴν ψυχὴν τιμίαν ἐμαυτῶ, ὡς τελειῶσαι τὸν δρόμον μου μετὰ χαρᾶς καὶ τὴν διακονίαν ἣν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, διαμαρτύρασθαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

All' oudhenòs lògou piòuma oudhè ècho teen psychèen timìan emavtò, os teleòsai ton dròmon mou metà charàs kai teen diakonìan een èlabhon parà tou Kyriou Yeesou, diamartýrasthai to evangèlion tees chàritos tou Theòu.

(Paul is taking his leave of the Ephesian church leaders.)

'But none of this does anything for me, neither do I regard my life as of value for myself, in order to complete my race with joy as well as the commission I have received from the Lord Jesus to fully witness to the good news of the grace of God.'

Acts 20.24/ Πραξεις 20.24; Isaiah 10.1-12.6, 2 Chron.28.5-21

וַיִּמְאַסוּ אֶת-חֻקֵּי וְאֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-כָּרַת אֶת-אֲבוֹתָם וְאֶת-עֲדוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר-הָעִיד בָּם וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי הַהֶבֶל וַיַּהֲבִלוּ וְאַחֲרֵי הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר-סָבִיבִתֶּם אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתָם לִבְלֹתֵי עֲשׂוֹת כְּהֵם

Va yimasu et chukkàyv ve èt beritò ashèr karàt et abhotàm, ve èt edotàyv ashèr he-ìd bam, va yelkhù acharèy ha-hèbhèl va yehbalù, ve acharèy ha-goyim ashèr sebhivotàm ashèr tzivvàm Adonài otàm le bhilti asòt ka-hèm.

(Of the northern kingdom of Israel's downfall and exile)

So they rejected His principles and His covenant that He had made with their forefathers, and His stories by which He had witnessed to them, and they went after what was worthless and became worthless too, following the surrounding peoples when the LORD had instructed them not to do as they did.

Second Kings 17v15/ט"ט ב יח"ה מלכים

A reflection on Acts 20.24 'Paul has burned his bridges with his old life among the Pharisees. He knows, as he heads back across Europe and Asia towards Israel that anger and vengeance lie in wait for him there. Yet he also knows the commission, the call of his Messiah, his Lord Jesus upon him and like a soldier ordered into dangerous territory, he cannot put his own safety before the joy of seeing his life's work done. This is the immense power of the message of the good news of Jesus. For Paul, even life itself is not worth the joy of imparting His outrageous message of love to a lost and hostile world.'

יהללו את-שם יהוה כי הוא צוה ונבראו

Yehalleù et-shèm Adonài, ki Hu tzivvàm ve-nibhra'ù.

Celebrate the Lord's name, for He directed and they were created.

Psalm 148.5/ה"ה קמח"ה תהלים

A reflection on Psalm 148.5 'This Psalm is a celebration of God's creative genius, calling on everything that exists to express praise to its Maker, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; stars and planets, flora and fauna, even weather systems are all part of the joyful party, with humankind, young and old. Yet this Creator of all is not aloof and separated, for the Song ends with a reminder that God is close to the people of His covenant.'

July 1 2016-2017 Day 183-182 Readings 2 Kings 18:13-19:37, Acts 21:1-17, Psalm 149:1-9, Proverbs 18:8

וַיִּקַּח חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶת-הַסְּפָרִים מִיַּד הַמְּלָאכִים וַיִּקְרָא וַיַּעַל בֵּית יְהוָה וַיִּפְרָשֶׂהוּ חֲזַקְיָהוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

Va-yiqqàch Chizqiyàhu et-ha-sepharìm mi-yàd mal'akhim, va-yiqra'èm va-ya'al beyt Adonài va-yiphresèyhu Chizqiyàhu liphnèy Adonài.

So Hezekiah took the letter delivered by the messengers, and read it, went up to the House of the Lord, where Hezekiah stretched it out before the Lord.

2 Kings 19.14/מלכים ב' ט"ד

A reflection on 2 Kings 19.14 'Hezekiah, King of Judah, received a letter from a formidable enemy, Sennacherib of Assyria, urging him not to think that the Lord will deliver him and the people from the advancing armies of the north. But Hezekiah, in humility and dependence on God alone, submitting the nation to the Lord, takes the threats and unrolls them before the Lord in the Temple. The outcome is a supernatural intervention which totally wipes out the Assyrian hordes, and topples Sennacherib in a bloody coup, without a single blow struck by the Judeans.'

ἀπεκρίθη τε ὁ Παῦλος· τί ποιεῖτε κλαίοντες καὶ συνθρύπτοντές μου τὴν καρδίαν; ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐ μόνον δεθῆναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀποθανεῖν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ ἑτοίμως ἔχω ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ.

Apekrithee te o Pàvlos, 'Ti pièete klàiontes kai synthryptondes mou teen kardhian? Egò gar ou mònnon dhethènai, allà kai apothanèn ees Ierousalèem etimos ècho ypèr tou onòmatos tou Kyriou Ieesou.'

Then Paul replied, 'What are you doing weeping and discouraging my heart? For I am ready not only to be tied up, but even to die in Jerusalem for the sake of the name of the Lord Jesus.'

Acts 21.13/Πραξεις 21.13

A reflection on Acts 21.13 'While at Caesarea, a prophet named Agabus arrives from Judea, and taking Paul's belt, ties the emissary's hands with it and says this is how the Jews will treat him when gets to Jerusalem. Everyone appeals to Paul not to continue to Jerusalem, where his life will be in jeopardy, but Paul confesses he is ready to be imprisoned and even to die for Jesus if required. Luke seems to have been included in this appeal to Paul to stay away from Jerusalem, for he says that 'when we could see it was of no use, we gave up and left it to the Lord.'

July 2 2017⁶ Day 18³⁴ Readings 2 Kings 20:1-22:2, Acts 21:18-36, Psalm 150:1-6, Proverbs 18:9-10

וַיֵּשֶׁב וַיְבִן אֶת-הַבַּמֹּת אֲשֶׁר אֲבַד חִזְקִיָּהוּ אָבִיו וַיִּקַּם מִזְבַּחַת לְבַעַל וַיַּעַשׂ אֲשֶׁרָה
כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אַחָאָב מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְכָל-צִבְאֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיַּעֲבֹד אֹתָם

Va-yashàbh va-yibhèn et-ha-bamòt ashèr ibbàd Chizkiyàhu abhiv, va-yaqèm mizbechòt la-Ba'al, va-ya'às Asheràh ka-ashèr asàh Achàbh mèlekh Yisra'èl va-yishtachù le-khòl tzebhàh ha-shamàyim va-ya-abhòd otàm.

And (King Manasseh of Judah) rebuilt the hilltop shrines which his father Hezekiah had demolished, and he set up altars to the Master-idol (Ba'al) and made an Asherah-totem like Ahab, king of Israel had once done and he prostrated himself before all the constellations of the heavens and did obeisance to them

מלכים ב כ"ג/ג' Second Kings 21v3

A reflection on 2 Kings 21.3 'How terrible that after the outstanding reign of King Hezekiah, during which Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Messiah and the glory of the Lord upon His people, with miracles and deliverance, the next generation with Manasseh reverts to the old non-gods, exchanging truth for a lie. But God does not leave Himself without a witness in every generation, and there are those coming, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who will continue to hear and to communicate the unchanging covenanted heart of God toward His wayward people.'

כל הנשמה תהלל יה הללויה

Kol ha-neshamàh tehallèl YAH, Hallelu YAH!

Let everything that has breath, praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

תהילים קנ"ו/ו' Ps.150v6

A reflection on Psalm 150.6 'If we needed Scriptural permission for exuberant worship, Psalm 150 provides it incontrovertibly. It begins and ends with the word 'Hallelujah', which is a call to boisterous, celebratory praise of the Lord, entailing the ram's horn shophar, strings, woodwind, drums, percussion and whirling dance – with an appeal finally for everything that breathes to let out a cry of joy in honour of God! '

מגדל עז שם יהוה בו ירוץ צדיק ונשגב

Migdàl oz shem Adonài; bo yarùtz tzaddìq ve-nisgàbh.

The Lord's name is a tower of strength; the person of integrity runs into it and is secure.

משלי יח"י' Proverbs 18.10

A reflection on Proverbs 18.10 'The name of the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Father of our Messiah, Jesus, is a place of refuge and security for those who live with integrity in His covenant. At times when other names fail and other towers fall, this name has proved throughout history to be the stronghold of safety.'

July 3 2017⁶ Day 18⁴⁵ Readings 2 Kings 22:3-23:30, Acts 21:37-22:16, Psalm 1:1-6, Proverbs 18:11-12

אך לא יחשב אתם הכסף הנתן על-ידם כי באמונה הם עשים

Akh lo-yechashèv ittàm ha-kèseph ha-nittàn al-yadàm, ki ve-emunàh hem osìm

(King Josiah's instructions about the workmen repairing the Temple in his time)

'Only there is no need to keep accounts for the money given into their keeping, for they are working with such trustworthiness'

מלכים ב כב"ז/ז' Second Kings 22v7

A reflection on 2 Kings 22.7 'King Josiah has such confidence in the trustworthiness of workmen who are rebuilding the Temple that he tells them not to bother accounting for the money he gives them for the work. In a day where everything has to be paper-trailed and verified, to check and double-check each other, there is a longing in our hearts for this kind of integrity in our dealings. '

וְכַמְהוּ לֹא-הָיָה לְפָנָיו מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-שָׁב אֶל-יְהוָה בְּכָל-לִבּוֹ וּבְכָל-נַפְשׁוֹ וּבְכָל-מְאֵדוֹ כְּכֹל
תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה וְאִחֲרָיו לֹא-קָם כִּמּוֹהוּ

Ve-khamòhu lo-hayàh le-phanàyv mèlekh ashèr shabh el-Adonài be-khòl lebhobhò u-bhe-
khòl naphshò u-bhe-khòl me'odò, ke-khòl Toràh Moshèh, ve-acharàyv lo-qàm kamòhu
(Of Josiah) And before him there had not been a king like him who had turned to the LORD
with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with the Torah
life-rule of Moses, and after him there arose none like him
Second Kings 23v25/ מלכים ב כג"כה

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν προεχειρίσατό σε γνῶναι τὸ θέλημα
αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἀκοῦσαι φωνῆν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ
O dhe èepen, 'O Theòs ton patèron eemòn pro-echeerisatò-se gnònai to thèleema avtòu kai
idhèen ton dhìkaion kai akòusai phonèn ek tou stòmatos avtou.

(Paul is speaking of Ananias' words to him)

He then said, 'The God of our fathers has selected you to know His intention and to see the
Righteous One and to hear His voice from His own mouth.'

Acts 22.14/Πραξεις 22.14

A reflection on Acts 22.14 'Paul before the hostile crowd in the Jerusalem temple is telling
the story of his calling and mission, and recalls how Ananias, the faithful brother who came
to pray for him in Acts 9.17, revealed to him the truth of what he had experienced; Paul had
been chosen to know God's will, to have a physical manifestation of the risen Jesus, whom
Luke calls 'the Righteous One' and to hear His actual voice. All this to a man who had only
the day before been pursuing and imprisoning the followers of this Messiah. No wonder Paul
wants to speak of this conversion, even before an angry crowd baying for his blood.'

הוֹן עֲשִׂיר קִרְיַת עֲזוֹ וּכְחוּמָה נִשְׁגַּבָּה בְּמִשְׁכַּתוֹ

Hon ashìr qiryàt uzzì u-khe-chomàh nisgabhàm be-maskitò.

In their fancy, the rich think their wealth is a strong city defended by secure walls.

Proverbs 18.11/משלי יח"יא

A reflection on Proverbs 18.11 'In a moment, fortunes are lost; in the blink of an eye,
millions disappear, yet people still put their faith in money. The Sage warns against this
fanciful ideology, echoing what he has just shared about the Lord being the only true safe-
deposit for our lives and wellbeing.'

**July 4 2016-2017 Day 186-185 Readings 2 Kings 23:31-25:30, Acts 22:17-23:10, Psalm
2:1-12, Proverbs 18:13**

וַיִּקְמוּ כָל-הָעָם מִקָּטָן וְעַד-גָּדוֹל וְשָׂרֵי הַחַיָּלִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי יָרְאוּ מִפְּנֵי כַשְׂדִּים
Va-yaqumu kol-ha-àm mi-qatòn ve-àd gadòl ve-sarèy ha-hayalìm ve-yabhò-u Mitzràyim ki
yar'ù mipnèy Khasdim.

So the people mobilised, from the small to the great, along with the generals of the armies,
and came to Egypt, for they were terrified of the Babylonians.

2 Kings 25.26/ מלכים ב כה"כו

A reflection on 2 Kings 25.26 ‘So here, after all the amazing story of God’s deliverance and covenanted grace towards His beloved people, they find themselves back where they started, in Egypt, dependent on a weak Pharaoh to defend them from the marauding masses of Babylon. The Temple is destroyed, the King deported, his sons murdered. It is a terrible end to a glorious chapter. But the book is not finished, and even as God’s people languish in exile, hope will rise that redemption will come, for the Lord cannot forsake His covenant.’

Γνούς δὲ ὁ Παῦλος ὅτι τὸ ἐν μέρος ἐστὶ Σαδδουκαίων, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον Φαρισαίων, ἔκραξεν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ Φαρισαῖός εἰμι, υἱὸς Φαρισαίου· περὶ ἐλπίδος καὶ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν ἐγὼ κρίνομαι.

Gnous dhe o Pàvlos òti to en mèros estì Saddoukaìon, to dhe èteron Pharisaiòn, èkraxen en to synedhrio, ‘Àndres adhelphì, egò Pharisai-òs-eemi, yiòs Pharisaiou; perì elpidhos kai anastàseos nekròn egò krìnomai.

So Paul, knowing that one faction were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, called out to the Sanhedrin (the ruling assembly of the Jews), ‘Men and brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; I am being judged because of my hope for the resurrection of the dead.’

Acts/Πραξεις 23.6

A reflection on Acts 23.6 ‘Paul is in a terribly dangerous situation. He has come to Jerusalem, where many of his brother Jews are furious about his defection to the Jesus followers; the Roman official guarding him for his own protection has now brought Paul into the Sanhedrin, the ruling assembly of Jewish matters, where Paul sees an opportunity to find support among his fellow Pharisees, who, unlike the materialist Sadducees, believe in a life to come and in resurrection. In confessing the resurrection of Jesus, Paul is being true to his Pharisee roots, and the ensuing tumult between the two factions over his right to hold this teaching results in Paul’s being hurried away by his Roman guards.’

July 5 ~~2016~~-2017 Day ~~187~~-186 Readings 1 Chronicles 1:1-2:17, Acts 23:11-35, Psalm 3:1-8, Proverbs 18:14-15

וַיֹּלֶד אֲבְרָהָם אֶת-יִצְחָק בְּנֵי יִצְחָק עֶשָׂו וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

Va-yòled Abhrahàm et Yitzchàq; benèy Yitzchàq Esàv ve-Yisra’èl.

And Abraham fathered Isaac; the sons of Isaac were Esau and Israel.

1 Chronicles 1.34/דברי הימים א ט"לד

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 1.34 ‘In the Hebrew Bible, the two books of Chronicles, (in Hebrew, ‘Dibhrèy Yamìm’, the Words of the Days), are placed last, as a kind of resumé of the whole story, starting with Adam, ending with the return to the land at Cyrus’ decree. In the first two chapters, the all-important family tree of Israel is given, from Adam to David. In this verse, we recall that the God who put it all together rejoices to be known by all as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the men with whom He cut the covenant and to whose people He commits Himself in ‘chesed’, covenant-bonded grace; through His Messiah, Jesus, all who trust that grace are included in the commonwealth of His people.’

Τῆ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ νυκτὶ ἐπιστὰς αὐτῷ ὁ Κύριος εἶπε· θάρσει, Παῦλε· ὡς γὰρ διεμαρτύρω τὰ περὶ ἐμοῦ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, οὕτω σε δεῖ καὶ εἰς Ῥώμην μαρτυρῆσαι.

Tee dhe epìdusi nyktì epistàs avtò o Kýrios èepe, ‘Thàrsi, Pàvle; os gar diemartýro ta perì emòu ees Yerousalèem, òuto se dee kai ees Ròmeen martyréesai.’

But the next night, the Lord stood beside him and said, ‘Courage, Paul; for as you have given account for me in Jerusalem, so you must also give account in Rome.’ [Acts/ Πραξεις 23.11](#)

[Acts 23.11/ Πραξεις 23.11](#)

A reflection on Acts 23.11. ‘It is clear from this and other passages in Acts that Paul’s journey with Jesus is not just a cerebral philosophising about life, but a mystical, supernatural interaction of heaven and earth; here, Jesus Himself appears and speaks with Paul to encourage him in the midst of His suffering. These words spoken are words of Jesus the risen, glorified Lord, coming to stand at Paul’s side to direct his coming course. The Lord is not confined to invisibility, and never has been!’

July 6 2016-2017 Day 188-187 Readings 1 Chronicles 2:18-4:4, Acts 24:1-27, Psalm 4:1-8, Proverbs 18:16-18

[ששה נולד-לו בְּחֶבְרוֹן וַיִּמְלֹךְ-שָׁם שִׁבְעַ שָׁנִים וְשִׁשָּׁה חֳדָשִׁים וְשְׁלוֹשׁ שָׁנָה מִלְּךָ בִּירוּשָׁלַם](#)

[Shìshah nolàd lo bhe-Chebhròn, va-yimlàkh sham shèbha shanìm ve-shìsha chadashìm, u-sheloshìm ve-shalòsh shanàh malàkh b’Irushalàyim.](#)

[Six sons were born to \(David\) in Hebron, and he reigned there seven years and six months, then thirty three years he reigned in Jerusalem.](#)

[1 Chronicles 3.4/ד"ד א ג' דברי הימים](#)

[A reflection on 1 Chronicles 3.4 ‘Amidst the lists of names of Israel’s key figures, David’s life appears, highlighting in particular the two episodes of his reign, beginning in Hebron then, after the fall of Ishbosheth, his accession to the throne of all twelve tribes of Israel, based in Jerusalem. His forty year rule was a golden age for the monarchy, a model and measure for the rest of the kings to come and the signpost to the nature of his descendant, Messiah’s to come.’](#)

[ὁμολογῶ δὲ τοῦτό σοι, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν λέγουσιν αἴρεσιν, οὕτω λατρεύω τῷ πατρῷ Θεῷ, πιστεύων πᾶσι τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς προφήταις γεγραμμένοις.](#)

[Omologò dhe tòutò si, òti katà teen odhòn een lègousin àiresin, òuto latrèvo to patrò-o Theò, pistèvon pàsi tis katà ton nòmon kai tis en tis prophètais yegrammènis.](#)

[\(Paul is speaking before Governor Felix\)](#)

[I admit, though, this much to you, that it is according to the Way, which they say is a heresy, that I worship the God of my forefathers, believing everything that is written in His life-rule and in the prophets.](#)

[Acts/Πραξεις 24.14](#)

[A reflection on Acts 24 .14 ‘Defending himself, Paul acknowledges Felix’s role as judge in this matter, and then states that he is an orderly Temple worshipper, to which fact he can find witnesses, and not a stirrer of trouble. He admits that he is a follower of what he calls The Way \(Greek ‘ee Odhós’ \), which seems to be the name the believers were calling themselves](#)

by. This word can mean road, or way or journey, and is a title Jesus gave Himself in John 14.6’

נתתה שמחה בלבי מעת דגנם ותירושם רבו

Natatàh simchàh ve-libbi me-èt deganàm ve-tiroshàm rabbù

You have given me greater joy in my heart than all their time spent with much grain and new wine brings them

תהילים ד"ז/47 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 4.7 ‘Some years ago, a visitor to one of our ‘dry house’ cèilidh dances where alcohol is not served exclaimed that this was the most fun he had ever had without being drunk! Speaking to the abuse of alcohol so rife today, here in Scripture we find the Singer claiming to have more joy and fun in his heart than any drinker finds in their drink. Followers of Jesus are not told to shun alcohol – Jesus made the best wine, after all! – but we don’t resort to it as an escape or refuge. That place of riotous joy we find only in Him.’

~~ὁμολογῶ δὲ τοῦτό σοι, ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν λέγουσιν αἴρεσιν, οὕτω λατρεύω τῷ πατρὶ Ὁ Θεῷ, πιστεύων πᾶσι τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς προφήταις γεγραμμένοις.~~

~~Omologò dhe tòutò si, òti katà teen odhòn een lègousin àiresin, òuto latrévo to patrò o Theò, pistèvon pàsi tis katà ton nòmon kai tis en tis prophètais yegrammènis.~~

~~(Paul is speaking before Governor Felix)~~

~~I admit, though, this much to you, that it is according to the Way, which they say is a heresy, that I worship the God of my forefathers, believing everything that is written in His life-rule and in the prophets.~~

~~Acts/Πράξεις 24.14~~

~~A reflection on Acts 24 .14 ‘Defending himself, Paul acknowledges Felix’s role as judge in this matter, and then states that he is an orderly Temple worshipper, to which fact he can find witnesses, and not a stirrer of trouble. He admits that he is a follower of what he calls The Way (Greek ‘ee Odhós’), which seems to be the name the believers were calling themselves by. This word can mean road, or way or journey, and is a title Jesus gave Himself in John 14.6’~~

July 7 2016-2017 Day 189-188 Readings 1 Chronicles 4:5-5:17, Acts 25:1-27, Psalm 5:1-12, Proverbs 18:19

ויקרא יעבץ לאלהי ישראל לאמר אם-ברך תברכני והרביית את-גבולי והיתה ידך עמי ועשית מרעה לבלתי עצבי--ויבא אלהים את אשר-שאל

Va-yiqrà Ya’bèytz l’Elohèy Yisra’èl leymòr, ‘Im barèkh tebharkhèyni ve-hirbìta et-gebhulì, ve-haytàh yadkhà immi ve-asìta mey-ramàh lebhilti atzbi’; va-yabhè Elohim et-ashèr sha’al. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, ‘Would You really bless me and extend my boundaries, and would Your hand be with me, not letting any evil thing harm me’; and God granted what he asked.’

דברי הימים א ד"י/1 Chronicles 4.10

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 4.10 ‘In the midst of all the names in the opening chapters of the Chronicles, (In Hebrew, ‘Dibhrèy ha-Yamìm’, the account of days), comes this simple prayer of Jabez, about whom we know little, other than that he was of the tribe of Judah, around the time of the Judges. His name means ‘grief’ or ‘sorrow’, but he reaches out to God and asks Him for blessing and growth of his boundaries, a prayer which God grants. His prayer has

become known and reproduced often, exemplifying to us the love of a heavenly Father who is willing to bless and to increase our wellbeing in Him.'

וְאֲנִי--בְּרֹב חֶסֶדְךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ אֲשַׁתְּחֹנֶה אֶל-הֵיכַל-קֹדֶשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ
Va-anì be-ròbh chasdekhà abhò bheytèkha; eshtachavèh el-heykhàl qodshekhà be-yiratèkha
As for me, in the greatness of Your covenant-bonded grace I will come to Your house; I will bow myself down towards the place You have set apart, in awe of You.
Psalm 5v7/ז"ז תהילים ה"ז

A reflection on Psalm 5.7 'There is something in the Biblical approach to the Lord which cannot help but react physically to the sheer magnitude of God's provision. Here the Singer is so overwhelmed by the enormity and durability of the Lord's covenanted, inexhaustible supply of self-giving grace in 'hesed', that he prostrates his body in wonder in the direction of the place of God's dwelling. This is a full-blooded, engaged worship; no self-conscious, half-hearted quietism here. This worshipper comes confident in God and abandoned to His adoration.'

July 8 2016-2017 Day 18990 Readings 1 Chronicles 5:18-6:81, Acts 26:1-32, Psalm 6:1-10, Proverbs 18:20-21

וַיַּעַר אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-רוּחַ פּוּל מֶלֶךְ-אַשּׁוּר וְאֶת-רוּחַ תִּלְגַּת פִּלְנֶסֶר מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וַיִּגְלֵם לְרֵאוּבֵנִי וּלְגַדִּי וּלְחֻצֵי שִׁבְט מְנַשֶּׁה וַיְבִיֵּאֵם לְחַלְחַל וּחְבוּר וְהָרָא וְנָהָר גּוֹזָן עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
Va-ya'ar Elohey Yisra'el et-rùach Pul mèlekh Ashùr ve-èt rùach Tilgàt Pìlnèser mèlekh Ashur va-yaglèm la-Re'ubhèni ve-la-Gadì ve-la-chàtzi shèbhet Menassèh va-yebhì'em la-Chelàch ve-Chabhòr ve-Harà u-nehàr Gozàn ad ha-yòm ha-zèh
And the God of Israel provoked the spirit of Pul and the spirit of Tilgat-pilneser, kings of Assyria and they exiled the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and carried them off to Helach and Habor and Hara, as far as the River Gozan, where they remain to this day.

דְּבַרֵי הַיָּמִים א ה"כ/1 Chronicles 5v26

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 5.26 'The terrible consequences of Israel's affairs with the non-gods around them and their bowing down to statues of them is seen first in this deportation of three of the tribes to Gozan in modern day Syria and Iraq. It seems puzzling that God is the agent of this terrible decision to carry them away, until we recognise that it is also important to see that all that happens is within the overview of God; He has his hand on the tiller of human history, even when that history brings darkness and disaster.'

τί ἄπιστον κρίνεται παρ' ὑμῶν εἰ ὁ Θεὸς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει;

Ti àpiston krinetai par'ymìn ee o Theòs nekròus eyèeri?

(Paul is addressing King Agrippa)

'Why should it be considered beyond belief by you that God should raise the dead?'

Acts/Πραξεις 26.8

A reflection on Acts 26.8 'Paul gets the chance to tell his story to King Agrippa, and he holds nothing back; why would a Jewish king think it incredible that God would raise the dead? After all, there are accounts in the prophets of resurrection, and Job asserts that he shall stand on the last day on the earth. Paul is passionate in wanting all people everywhere, even the king, to share his life-changing encounter with the living Messiah, Jesus, raised by His Father from the grave; his chains do not deter his challenge to his hearers to respond to faith in the Lord.'

July 9 2017⁵ Day 190 Readings 1 Chronicles 7:1-8:40, Acts 27:1-20, Psalm 7:1-17, Proverbs 18:22

וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי-אוּלָם אַנְשִׁים גִּבּוֹרֵי-חַיִל דֹּרְכֵי קֶשֶׁת וּמַרְבִּים בָּנִים וּבְנֵי בָנִים--מֵאָה
וּחֲמִשִּׁים כָּל-אֶלֶה מִבְּנֵי בְנֵימִן

Va-yihyù bhenèy-Ulàl anashim gibborèy chàyil dorkhèy qèshet u-marbim banim u-bhenèy bhanim, meàh va-chamishim kol èyleh mi-benèy Bhinyamin.

And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour, archers and with many sons and grandsons, a hundred and fifty in total. These are all the descendants of Benjamin.

1 Chronicles 8.40/מ"ח דברי הימים א

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 8.40 ‘While for the reader of today the lists of names upon names in the book of First Chronicles may seem tedious, they are the witness to the faithfulness of God throughout generations, and His value set on every person. In the case of the tribe of Benjamin, almost wiped out in the time of the Judges, their survival and thriving is testimony to the covenanted grace of the Lord, who continues His unfailing commitment right up to our very generation.’

λέγων αὐτοῖς: ἄνδρες, θεωρῶ ὅτι μετὰ ὑβρεως καὶ πολλῆς ζημίας οὐ μόνον τοῦ φόρτου καὶ τοῦ πλοίου, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν μέλλειν ἔσσεσθαι τὸν πλοῦν. ὁ δὲ ἑκατοντάρχης τῷ κυβερνήτῃ καὶ τῷ ναυκλήρῳ ἐπέειθετο μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς ὑπὸ Παύλου λεγομένοις.

Lègon avtis, ‘Àndres, theorò òti metà ýbhreos kai pollèes zeemias ou mònnon tou phòrtou kai tou pliou, allà kai ton psychòn eemòn mèllin èsesthai ton ploun.’ O dhe ekatondàrchees to kybhernètee kai to navklèero epèetheto màllon ee tis ypò Pàvlou legomènis.

(Paul) said to them, ‘Guys, I believe that this voyage risks of a lot of damage not only to the cargo and ship, but to our lives as well.’ But the centurion trusted the captain and the ship-owner more than Paul’s words.

Acts/Πραξεις 27.10,11

A reflection on Acts 27.10-11 ‘The Lord gives Paul insight into the dangers of the winter voyage to Italy, but the majority choose to ignore him, and they set off. Great store is set by the reason of man, but Scripture shows us again and again the fickleness and fallibility of his decisions, when his ears are closed to God. Even so, the Lord intends for Paul to get to Rome, and in His compassion, He will intervene to rescue them from the consequences of their foolhardiness.’

July 10 2016-2017 Day 192-191 Readings 1 Chronicles 9:1-10:14, Acts 27:21-44, Psalm 8:1-9, Proverbs 18:23-24

וּסְבִיבֹת בֵּית-הָאֱלֹהִים יִלִּינוּ כִּי-עֲלִיהֶם מִשְׁמֶרֶת וְהֵם עַל-הַמִּפְתָּח וְלִבְקֶר לִבְקֶר
U-sebhibhòt beyt Elohim yalinu, ki alèyhem mishmèret ve-hèm al ha-maphtëach ve-la-bòqer
la-bòqer.

So they (the four Levite gatekeepers) lived around the House of God, since it was their duty to open it up every morning.

1 Chronicles 9.27/כ"ז דברי הימים א

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 9.27 ‘The Singer of Israel says in Psalm 84.10 that he would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than dwell with wickedness; here, we read of the four Levite priests whose task it was to give access to God’s presence day by day, living in the vicinity so that they could be sure to promptly open the doors. We, however, do not

need such a shrine made with hands; instead, morning by morning, we open the doors of our hearts to access the Lord's holy presence, living as He does in the fabric of our lives.'

διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς· τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τῆς ὑμετέρας σωτηρίας ὑπάρχει· οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑμῶν θριξ̄ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς πεσεῖται.

Diò parakalò ymàs metalabhìn trophèes, tòuto gar pros tees ymèteras soteerías ypàrchi;
Oudhènos gar ymòn thrix ek tees kephalèes pesètai.

So I recommend you all have some food, for this is part of your rescue; for not a single hair of your head will fall out.

Acts 27.34/ Πραξεις 27.34

A reflection on Acts 27.34 'In peril at sea, Paul and his fellow travellers have not eaten for two weeks. Now, having received the promise of the Lord that everyone on board will be rescued, Paul urges them all to do what they can practically to co-operate with God's will. Paul confidently proceeds to give thanks and eat, even though they are in imminent danger of shipwreck, because He has entrusted himself to the sure word of God.'

July 11 2016-2017 Day 193-192 Readings 1 Chronicles 11:1-12:18, Acts 28:1-31, Psalm 9:1-12, Proverbs 19:1-3

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ חֶבְרֹנָה וַיִּכְרַת לָהֶם דָּוִד בְּרִית בְּחֶבְרוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
וַיִּמְשְׁחוּ אֶת-דָּוִד לְמֶלֶךְ עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּדָּבָר יְהוָה בִּיד-שְׁמוּאֵל

Va-yavò'u kol ziqnèy Yisra'èl el ha-mèlekh Chebhrònah, vayikhròt lahèm David berit be-Chebhròn liphnèy Adonài, va-yimshechù et-David le-mèlekh al-Yisra'èl, ki-debhàr Adonài be-yàd Shmu'èl.

And all the elders of Israel came to Hebron, to the king and David cut a covenant with them in Hebron before the presence-face of the LORD, and they anointed David as king over Israel, as the LORD had promised through Samuel.

One Chronicles 11v3/ג"א דברי הימים א

A reflection on 1 Chron. 11.3 'The Chronicler here makes the point that David's eventual anointing as king is not a mere human political action, but one which has already been established by the Lord through the action of Samuel at the beginning of this story. A covenant is cut – the Hebrew term involves sacrifice – and this is done in a way intimately connected with the Lord, invoking His blessing over the nation as they move forward into a new chapter.'

κακεῖθεν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἀκούσαντες τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθον εἰς ἀπάντησιν ἡμῖν ἄχρις Ἀππίου Φόρου καὶ Τριῶν Ταβερνῶν, οὓς ἰδὼν ὁ Παῦλος εὐχαριστήσας τῷ Θεῷ ἔλαβε θάρσος.

Kàkithen i adhelphì akòusandes ta eemòn exèlthon ees apàndeesin eemìn àchris Appiòu Phòrou kai Triòn Tabhernòn, ous idhòn o Pàvlos evcharistèesas to Theò èlabhe thàrsos.

From there (Rome), when the brothers heard about us, they came as far as the Appian Forum to meet us, to the Three Taverns; when Paul saw them, he thanked God and was encouraged.
Acts/Πραξεις 28.15

A reflection on Acts 28.15 'Nearing Italy, they call in at Syracuse, (modern Siracusa in Sicily), then on to Rhegium (modern Reggio di Calabria) on the mainland before sailing up the west coast of Italy, to land at Puteoli (modern Puozzoli, six or seven miles west of Naples). Here they spend a week with some believers, before finally reaching Rome, by road along the Appian Way. Forty miles south of the city, at the Appian Forum, they are joined by

brothers from Rome, and at the Three Taverns, seven miles or so further towards Rome, where the first relay station was situated, thirty three miles south of the capitol. At last, Paul with Luke his narrator, arrive at the centre of the Empire.'

ויהי יהוה משגב לדך משגב לעתות בצרה

Vihì Adonài misgàbh la-dàkh, misgàbh le-itòt ba-tzaràh.

And the Lord will be a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in troubles times.

Psalm 9.9/ תהילים ט"י

A reflection on Psalm 9.9 'The picture the Singer portrays here is of the Lord as a refuge carved out of a cliff-face, a hiding-place from pursuers. Such rocky fastnesses are found in desert places, and offer defensive positions often in unassailable positions; so the Lord is a place to climb into, a place to shelter, a place of safety.'

July 12 2016-2017 Day 194-193 Readings 1 Chronicles 12:19-14:17, Romans 1:1-17, Psalm 9:13-20, Proverbs 19:4-5

וְדוֹד וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשְׁחָקִים לְפָנַי הָאֱלֹהִים--בְּכָל-עֵז וּבְשִׁירִים וּבְכַנְרֹת וּבְנַבְלִים וּבַתְּפִילִים וּבַמְצִלְתִּים וּבַחֲצֹצְרוֹת

Ve-David ve-khòl Yisra'èl mesachaqim liphnèy ha-Elohìm, be-khòl oz u-bhe-shirìm u-bhe-khinnoròt u-bhe-nebhalìm u-bhe-tuppìm u-bhi-metziltàyim, u-bhe-chatzotzeròt.

And David and all Israel partied before God for all they were worth, with songs and strings, pipes and drums, cymbals and trumpets.

1 Chronicles 13v8/ח"ח א יג דברי הימים

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 13.8 'Anyone who doubts that the praise of God can be expressive and full of celebration need only look at David's leading of his people in welcoming the box-chest of God's promises back among them. The word used first of David and Israel in this verse is that they laughed before the Lord, partying with song and dance, music and joy. Sombre silence is definitely not obligatory around the Maker of Heaven and Earth!'

Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ· δύναμις γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐστίν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληγι.

Ou gar epaischýnomai to evangèlion tou Christòu; dýnamis gar Theòu estin ees soteerian pandì to pistèvondi, Youdhàio te pròton kai Èlleeni.

For I am not embarrassed by the good news of Messiah; for it is God's power for rescuing all those who trust to it, primarily for the Jew, but also for the Greek.

Romans 1.16/Προς Ρωμαίους 1.16

A reflection on Romans 1.16 'Paul is writing to believers in Rome who are both Jews and non-Jews. He makes it clear that the good news of Messiah is above all the crown of the rescue-story which God has been telling through His people Israel, and for them He is the One they have been waiting for. But because Israel's Messiah has now, by His death, resurrection and ascension, widened and deepened the scope of the embrace of this story, even those beyond Israel are now called to entrust themselves to the rescuing arms of this King of the Jews, becoming in the process part of the commonwealth of God's own people.'

July 13 2016-2017 Day 195-194 Readings 1 Chronicles 15:1-16:36, Romans 1:18-32, Psalm 10:1-15, Proverbs 19:6-7

הודו ליהוה כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל
מן-העולם ועד העולם ויאמרו כל-העם ונהלל ליהוה

‘Hodù l’Adonài ki tov, ki le’olàm chasdò; barùkh Adonài Elohèy Yisraèl min-ha’olàm ve-ad ha-olàm’, ve-imrù kol-ha-àm, ‘Amèyn’ ve-‘Hallèl l’Adonài.’

‘Thank the LORD for He is good, for unlimited is His covenanted-bonded grace; blessed be the LORD God of Israel from eternity to eternity’ and all the people said ‘Amen’ and ‘Celebrate the Lord!’

One 1 Chronicles 16v34,36 לדברי הימים א טז"ל ל/36,34

A reflection on 1 Chron.16.34,36 ‘There is one refrain which Israel never tires of singing, that the ‘chesed’ of God, His self-sacrificial, self-obliging covenanted grace will never fail them. In Jesus Christ and the New Covenant in His blood, shed for many for the forgiveness of sins, this ‘chesed’ breaks out to reach the whole family of needy mankind. No wonder the people affirm this faithful God who is worth celebrating for all time!’

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους

Ta gar adrata avtòu apò ktiseos kòsmou tis peimasin no-ðumena kathoràtai, ee te aìdhios avtòu dhýnamis kai theiòtees, ees to èenai avtòus anapologyèetous.

For His invisible nature has been evidently shown since the creation of the world, understood from the things He has made, displaying His power and Deity, so that they cannot explain it away.

Romans/ Προς Ρωμαίους 1.20

A reflection on Romans 1.20 ‘Paul is crystal clear; reason leads inevitably to the conclusion that the order of the universe points to a Maker, as surely as the construction of a house points to the builder. Despite human attempts to write their Creator out of the script, the beauty and majesty, the power and awesome might of the cosmos keep giving away the reality of a Designer whose brilliance is only denied by folly and arrogance.’

July 14 2016-2017 Day 196-195 Readings 1 Chronicles 16:37-18:17, Romans 2:1-24, Psalm 10:16-18, Proverbs 19:8-9

כי לא ישבתי בבית מן-היום אשר העליתי את-ישראל עד היום הזה ואהיה מאהל אל-
אהל וממשכן

Ki lo yashàbhti be-bhèyt min hayòm ashèr he-elèyti et-Yisra’èl ad ha-yòm ha-zèh ve-ehyèh mey-ohèl el ohèl u-mimishkàn.

For I have not lived in a house since the day I raised Israel up until this very day, but I went from tent to tent and from dwelling-place to dwelling-place.

1 Chronicles 17v5/ה"ה יז"ה לדברי הימים א יז"ה/5

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 17.5 ‘King David feels ashamed that he is living in a luxurious palace, while God is making do with a tent! But God reminds him through the prophet Nathan that He has never asked for a permanent residence made with hands; the Lord is a mobile God, moving with His people where they are, not held in stone boxes and architectural structures. We have become so wedded to our idea of God inhabiting our fine shrines that we need to see that the Lord will not be bounded by our buildings, and neither should we, when it comes to celebrating His praise and honouring Him in the world He has made, for even that is not big enough to contain Him!’

קנה-לב אהב נפשו שמר תבונה למצא-טוב

Konèh lebh ohèbh naphshò; shomèr tebhunàh limtzò tobh

The possessor of good sense loves his life; the one who maintains discernment finds what is good.

Proverbs 19.8/ח"ט שלי יט

A reflection on Proverbs 19.8 ‘The word for Proverbs in Hebrew is ‘meshalim’ – words of authority, words for direction. In a world where so much wisdom is rejected, where dissolution and lack of self-control are often exalted, this millennia-old guidance, Scripture’s treasury of insight, still holds the key to hope and meaning even when folly is all around.’

July 15 2016-2017 Day 197-196 Readings 1 Chronicles 19:1-21:30, Romans 2:25-3:8, Psalm 11:1-7, Proverbs 19:10-12

ויאמר המלך דָּוִד לְאֹרְנָן לֹא כִּי-קָנָה אֶקְנָה בְּכֶסֶף מֵלֵא כִּי לֹא-אֲשָׂא אֶשְׂר-לְךָ לִיהוָה וְהַעֲלוֹת עֹלָה חֲנָם

Va-yòmer ha-mèlekh Davìd le-Ornàn, ‘Lo, ki qanòh eqnàh be-khèseph malè, ki lo essàh ashèr lekha lAdonài ve-ha-alòt chinnàm.’

And King David said to Ornan, ‘No; I must pay the full money for it. I can’t offer what belongs to you to the Lord or sacrifice what are free gifts to me.’

1 Chronicles 21.24/כד"א כא דברי הימים א

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 21.24 ‘David, in his pride and against the counsel of his advisers, has taken an unauthorised census of the people, which has resulted in retribution upon his people; yet God relents just as His angel is poised to strike Jerusalem at the barns of Ornan. David seeks to be reconciled to the Lord, but knows that he cannot bring something that has cost him nothing in sacrifice. He therefore pays Ornan in full, in gold to have the ground to dedicate as a place for an altar to restore peace. David is humbled before the awesome hand of God; he will not quickly presume to slight God in this way again.’

οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν, οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερωῖ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή, ἀλλ’ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι, οὐ γράμματι, οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

ou gar en to phanerò Youdhàios èstin, òudhe ee en to phanerò en sarkì peritomèe, all' o en to kryptò Youdhaios, kai peritomèe kardhìas en pnèvmati, ou gràmmatai, ou ò èpainos ouk ex anthròpon, all' ek tou Theòu.

For being a Jew isn't about externals, neither is the external physical sign of circumcision what it's all about; rather, it's in the inner man one is a Jew, and circumcision is about what the Spirit does in the heart, not because of laws; such a one isn't out for man's approval, but God's.

Romans/Ρωμαίους 2.28,29

A reflection on Romans 2.28-29 ‘Being one of God’s people, Paul says, is not a matter of outward marks and behaviours, but it is the encounter of having the self-protective, self-justifying cover of the heart removed and sacrificed to God which is the real issue, which only the Holy Spirit of God can bring about in new birth.’

July 16 2016-2017 Day 198-197 Readings 1 Chronicles 22:1-23:32, Romans 3:9-31, Psalm 12:1-8, Proverbs 19:13-14

וְאַרְבַּעַת אֲלָפִים שְׁעָרִים וְאַרְבַּעַת אֲלָפִים מְהַלְלִים לַיהוָה בְּכָל־יָמָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְהַלְלֵךְ
Ve-arba'at alaphim sho'arim ve-arba'at alaphim mehalelim l'Adonai ba-keylim ashèr asiti le-
hallèl

(David ordering the worship in His praise-tent)

And four thousand were to be gate-keepers and four thousand were to be worshippers of the LORD, bringing their instruments with which they praised

דברי הימים א כג"ה/1 Chronicles 23v5

A reflection on 1 Chron.23.5 'David believes the expressive, audible worship of God to be important enough to appoint four thousand 'mehalelim' (from the Hebrew word 'halal' meaning to loudly acclaim) – praise-givers with instruments who would be on duty 24/7 in the Holy Place, in shifts, exulting in God and declaring His attributes to the world. In our modern Christian culture that has tended to emphasise silence, we need to be aware that God also values noisy, abandoned expression of His praise, and fully embrace and explore both ends of the spectrum.'

πάντες γὰρ ἤμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ, δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

Pàndes gar èmarton kai ysteròundai tees dhòxees tou Theòu, dhikaiòumeni dhoreàn tee avtòu chàriti dhià tees apolytròseos tees en Christò Yeesòu.

For everyone has failed and missed the target of God's glory, having instead to be made worthy by the free gift of His grace, buying us back through Messiah Jesus.

Romans/Ρωμαίους 3.23,24

A reflection on Romans 3.23,24 'So often, people have quoted the first of these two verses and forgotten the second; Paul is not trying to rub our faces in the dirt of our human failure, but to point out that our best efforts at self-improvement will never bring us to the level of worth and value God has placed on us by giving us the priceless gift of His covenant-bonded grace by means of the spilt blood and bruised body of Jesus the Messiah. Trying to make ourselves worthy would be like trying to earn the place of a daughter or son, when we already are because of His selfless love!'

July 17 2016-2017 Day 199-198 Readings 1 Chronicles 24:1-26:11, Romans 4:1-12, Psalm 13:1-6, Proverbs 19:15-16

וַיִּפְּלוּ גוֹרְלוֹת מִשְׁמֶרֶת לְעֵמֶת כְּקֶטֶן כַּגְּדוֹל--מִבֵּין עַם-תַּלְמִיד

Va-yapilu goralot mishmèret le-ummàt, ka-qatòn ka-gadòl, meybhin im talmid.

So they took a draw for the duties, watch by watch, including small and great, the experienced as well as the apprentice.

1 Chronicles 25v8/ח"ה דברי הימים א כה"ח

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 25.8 'Here is the only occurrence of the Hebrew word for 'disciple' (talmid) in the Old Testament. It comes in the context of the allocation of the rota for the duties of the 24/7 worship going on in the Tent of Meeting. The purpose of the grouping, the previous verse tells us, is 'for instruction in the song of the Lord', with the experienced men training the apprentices, each group comprising of twelve singer-prophets. From this we realise that the calling together by Jesus of His twelve apprentices for His school of the kingdom was in continuity with the life of the people of Israel and the rhythm of their story.'

καὶ σημεῖον ἔλαβε περιτομῆς, σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων δι' ἀκροβυστίας, εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι καὶ αὐτοῖς τὴν δικαιοσύνην
Kai seemèion èlabhe peritomèes, sphrayìdha tees dikaiosýnees tees pisteos tees en tee akrobhystìa, ees to èenai avtòn patèra pàndon ton pistevòndon di' akrobhystias ees to loyisthèenai kai avtìs teen dikaiosýneen.

And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, the seal of the justification that comes by trusting, while he still had a foreskin, so that he would be the father of all uncircumcised believers, so that right standing with God would also be credited to them as well.

Romans 4.11/ Προς Ρωμαίους 4.11

A reflection on Romans 4.11 'Paul is making the point that the Lord's covenant with Abraham and his inclusion in God's heart did not depend on whether the patriarch had a foreskin or not. Abraham was not yet circumcised when he trusted God's promise made to him, which resulted in his being counted as in right standing with God. Circumcision comes several chapters later in the story. Paul is wanting us to see that Abraham is the father of all who trust God's promise, circumcised or uncircumcised, because of his self-surrendering faith, not because of his later physical operation.'

July 18 2016-2017 Day 200-199 Readings 1 Chronicles 26:12-27:34, Romans 4:13-5:5, Psalm 14:1-7, Proverbs 19:17

ולא-נשא דויד מספרם למבן עשרים שנה ולמטה כי אמר יהוה להרבבות את-ישראל ככוכבי השמים

Ve-lò nasà David misparàm le-mi-bèn esrìm shanàh u-le-matàh ki amàr Adonài le-harbòt et-Yisra'èl ke-khokhebhèy ha-shamàyim.

But David didn't record the number of men of twenty years of age and less, because the Lord had said that He would multiply Israel like stars in the heavens.

1 Chronicles 27v23/דברי הימים א כז"כג

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 27.23 'We recall from earlier reading in 2 Samuel 24 that David did in fact take an unauthorised census, which caused great harm to Israel, but we find here the reason that David had crossed the line with the Lord in doing it; his head-count dishonoured the promise of God that Israel would be multiplied to rival the number of stars in the heavens. Even though we can read the numbers in the record in 2 Samuel, the outcome is not recorded here in the official records of Israel, as a sign of faith in God's ability to fulfil His promise.'

Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Dhikaiothèndes oun ek pisteos irèeneen èchomen pros ton Thèon dhià tou Kyriou eemòn Yeesòu Christòu

So being given right standing as a result of faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5.1/ Προς Ρωμαίους 5.1

A reflection on Romans 5.1 ‘Continuing with his interpretation of Abraham’s story, Paul makes it clear that the patriarch and his wife, Sarah, received the promise not by what they did, but by believing what God said He would do. In the same way, our peace with God now comes not from doing things to appease Him, but by entrusting ourselves to His promise of rescue from our guilt and shame because of the reconciling life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord, Jesus the Messiah. This brings us deep and lasting peace, not dependent on our deeds.’

July 19 2016-2017 Day 201-200 Readings 1 Chronicles 28:1-29:30, Romans 5:6-21, Psalm 15:1-5, Proverbs 19:18-19

וְאַתָּה שְׁלֹמֹה-בְנִי דַע אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְעִבְדֵהוּ בְּלֵב שְׁלֵם וּבְנֶפֶשׁ חֲפֹצָה כִּי כָל-לִבְבוֹת דּוֹרָשׁ יְהוָה וְכָל-יֹצֵר מַחְשָׁבוֹת מִבֵּין אִם-תִּדְרֹשׁוּן יִמְצָא לְךָ וְאִם-תִּעְזָבֵנוּ יִזְנִיחֶךָ לְעַד
‘Ve-attàh, Shlomò bhenì, da et-Elohèy abhikha va-abhdèyhu be-lèbh shalèm, u-bhe-nèphesh chaphetzàh, ki khol lebhobhòt dorèsh Adonài ve-khòl yètzer machshabhòt meybhìn; im tidreshèynu, yimmatzèh lakh, ve-ìm ta’azbhènnu, yaznìchakha la-èd.’

(David speaking before the Assembly of Israel)

‘And you, Solomon, my son, get to know the God of your fathers_ and serve Him wholeheartedly, with all the desire in your being, for the LORD pursues every heart and understands every idea and its motivation; if you go after Him, He will let you find Him, but if you forsake Him, He will walk away from You forever.’

דברי הימים א כח"ט/9 First-1 Chronicles 28v9

A reflection on 1 Chron.28.9 ‘In this final, powerful charge of King David to his son Solomon is recorded the priority which David gives to relationship with the Lord. He calls him to be wholehearted in his pursuit of God, promising that the one who goes after God will encounter His revelation. But if Solomon turns away, He will find the Lord turning also away from him. Let us also be sure that the direction of our travel is always into Him, never away from Him.’

וְתַבְנִית כֹּל אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְרוּחַ עִמּוֹ לְחִצְרוֹת בַּיִת-יְהוָה וְלִכְלֵל-הַלְשָׁכוֹת סָבִיב--לְאַצְרוֹת בַּיִת הָאֱלֹהִים וְלְאַצְרוֹת הַקֹּדְשִׁים

Ve-tabhnìt kol ashèr hayàh ba-rùach immò, le-chatzròt beyt Adonài u-le-khol ha-leshakhòt sabhìbh, le-otzròt bèyt ha-Elohìm u-le-otzròt ha-qodashìm.

And the plan of all that was in him (David) by the Spirit, for the courts of the Lord’s house and for all the facilities surrounding it, for the treasuries of God’s house and for the holy treasures.

דברי הימים א כח"יב/12 1 Chronicles 28v12

A reflection on 1 Chronicles 28.12 ‘While we call the building which was erected in Jerusalem for Israel’s worship the Temple of Solomon, the plans and the vision for it were given by the Holy Spirit to his father, King David. David was not permitted to build it, because of the blood on his hands, but it was to him that the Lord revealed the blueprint which was then passed on to Solomon, along with the materials for its construction. The

Temple is therefore a work of revelation in the Spirit, which David transcribes in his own hand. (See v.19)'

εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνός παραπτώματι ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσε διὰ τοῦ ἐνός, πολλῶ
μᾶλλον οἱ τὴν περισσείαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης
λαμβάνοντες ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσι διὰ τοῦ ἐνός Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ee ghar to tou enòs paraptòmati o thànatos ebasilevse dhìa tou enòs, pollò màllon i teen
perissèian tees chàritos kai tees dhoreàs tees dhikaiosýnees lambhànondes en zoèe
bhasilèvsousi dià enòs, Yeesòu Christòu.

For if, because of one man's failure, death took control through that one event, how much
more will those are receiving the overflow of covenanted grace and the free gift of being
acquitted reign in life because of that one man, Jesus Christ.

Romans/ Προς Ρωμαίους 5.17

A reflection on Romans 5.17 'Paul's reasoning is clear; if death took control because of one
man's failure, then one man, Messiah Jesus, can also turn the tide of death and give us an
overflow of grace and freedom, so that we who entrust ourselves to Him will not just lead a
life, but reign in life!'

**July 20 ~~2016~~ 2017 Day ~~202~~ 201 Readings 2 Chronicles 1:1-3:17, Romans 6:1-23, Psalm
16:1-11, Proverbs 19:20-21**

ומי יעצר-כח לבנות-לו בית כי השמים ושמי השמים לא יכלכלהו ומי אני אשר אבנה-לו
בית כי אם-להקטיר לפניו

U-mì ya'atzàr kòach libhnòt lo bhàyt, ki ha-shamàyim u-shemèy ha-shamàyim lo
yekhalkelùhu, u-mì ashèr ebhnàh lo bàyt ki im le-haqtìr le-phanàyv.

But who has the power to build Him a house, whom the sky above us and space beyond
cannot contain? And how could I do any more than build Him a place just to burn incense
before His face?

2 Chronicles 2v6/ה"ו ב"ב דברי הימים ב

'Solomon is fully aware that the place he is building for Israel's worship centre cannot ever
contain God's presence, filling as He does the whole universe, nor can it ever be more than a
facility to which people can bring their offerings and prayers to present before His face. It is
key in our coming before the Lord to recognise the true perspective of His awesome
greatness and our small contribution, which nonetheless delights His heart and is welcomed
by Him, who made the moon and stars.'

νυνὶ δὲ ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας δουλωθέντες δὲ τῷ Θεῷ ἔχετε τὸν
καρπὸν ὑμῶν εἰς ἀγιασμόν, τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωῆν αἰώνιον.

Nynì dhe elevtherothèndes apò tees amartias dhoulothèndes dhe to Theò èchete ton karpòn
ymòn ees ayaismòn, to dhe tèlos zoèn aiònion.

So now, being liberated from failure and sin, and serving God you have the fruit of being
unreservedly His, with the outcome being life ~~forever~~unlimited.

Romans-6.22/ Προς Ρωμαίους 6.22

A reflection on Romans 6.22 'God's covenanted grace in Christ liberates us from our past

failure and sin, and brings us into the place of being unreservedly His – holy, His without rival. Now we have this incredible relationship with our loving Father-Maker, who has promised us with Jesus not only this closeness and belonging we have now, but the guarantee in Jesus' resurrection of a life that stretches out into unlimited future with Him.'

July 21 2016-2017 Day 203-202 Readings 2 Chronicles 4:1-6:11, Romans 7:1-13, Psalm 17:1-15, Proverbs 19:22-23

וַיְהִי כִּאֲחַד לַמַּחְצְרִים (לְמַחְצְרִים) וְלַמְשֻׁרְרִים לְהַשְׁמִיעַ קוֹל-אֶחָד לְהַלֵּל וּלְהוֹדוֹת לַיהוָה
וּכְהָרִים קוֹל בְּחֻצְרוֹת וּבְמִצְלֹתַיִם וּבְכָלֵי הַשִּׁיר וּבְהַלֵּל לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ
וְהַבַּיִת מְלֵא עֲנַן בֵּית יְהוָה

Va-yehì ke-echàd lamchatzrìm ve-lamshorerìm le-hashmìa qol-echàd le-hallèl u-le-hodòt
l'Adonài u-khe-harìm qol bach-tzotzeròt u-bhimtziltàyim u-bhe-khelèy ha-shìr u-bhe-hallèl
l'Adonai ki tobh ki le-olàm chasdò ve-ha-bàyt malè anàn beyt Adonài.

And so it happened as the trumpeters and the singers came together to be heard as one voice to celebrate and to thank the Lord and as they came to a crescendo of trumpets and cymbals during the song 'Praise the Lord, for He is good for His covenant-bondeded grace goes on forever', the building, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud.

2 Chronicles 5.13/דברי הימים ה"ג

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 5.13 'There is something about the celebrating of God by His people that He cannot resist. In their enjoyment of the unfailing grace of God, the musicians and singers of Israel engage all their energy, and as they reach a crescendo of praise, heaven and earth come together and a cloud condenses the atmosphere around the very presence of God in the newly-completed Temple. How God enjoys the praise of His people!'

ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε τῷ νόμῳ διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ
Χριστοῦ εἰς τὸ γενεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἕτερω, τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι, ἵνα
καρποφορησωμεν τῷ Θεῷ.

Ὁστε, adhelphì-mou, kai ymèes ethanatòtheete to nòmo dhià tou sòmatos tou Christòu ees to
yenèsthai ymàs etèro, to ek nekròn eyerthèndi, ina karpophorèesomen to Theò.

So, brothers and sisters, you also died to the regulations through the body of Messiah, in
order to become someone else's, that is, His, who was raised from the dead, so that we would
produce fruit for God.

Romans/ Προς Ρωμαίους 7.4

A reflection on Romans 7.4 'It is tragic that following Jesus could ever be seen as a code of
regulations, when Paul says explicitly that when our lives are connected to the death and
resurrection of Jesus, we are dead to the idea of pleasing God by keeping a set of directives.
Life with Jesus means our spirits are married to Him in the devotion of love, on the basis of
living to bring joy to His heart, not on a set of do's and dont's which we hope will make us
good enough for God – that is fruitless human religion, not relationship with Messiah!'

July 22 2016-2017 Day 204-203 Readings 2 Chronicles 6:12-8:10, Romans 7:14-8:8, Psalm 18:1-15, Proverbs 19:24-25

וַעֲתָה קוּמָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְנוֹחֵךְ--אֶתָּה וְאֶרֶון עֲנֵךְ כַּהֲנִיךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים יִלְבְּשׁוּ תְשׁוּעָה
וְחֲסִידֶיךָ יִשְׁמְחוּ בְטוֹב

יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-תֵּשֶׁב פְּנֵי מְשִׁיחֶךָ זְכָרָה לְחֲסִדֵי דָוִד עַבְדְּךָ

Ve'attah qùmah Adonài Elohim le-nuchèkha, attàh ve-aròn uzzèkha;

Kohanèykha, Adonài Elohim, yilbeshù teshùà Ve-chasidèkha yismechù bha-tòv.

Adonài Elohim, al-tashèv penèy meshichèkha; Zokhràh le-chasdèy-David avdèkha

And now, arise, LORD God, and come to Your rest, You and the Ark of Your strength;
 May Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with deliverance
 And Your committed ones rejoice in the good.
 LORD God, do not turn Your face from Your anointed; Remember the covenant commitment
 to David Your servant
 Second Chronicles 6v41 and 42/מב"מ ו"מא

A reflection on 2 Chron.6.41,42 ‘Solomon’s prayer recalls the prayer of Israel when she arrived at a new point on the nation’s wanderings –‘Arise O Lord God and come to Your resting place’. The King calls on the *hesed* of God, His obligation of grace to the covenant, which was shown to David, and desires the face, the presence of God to remain in this new venue for Israel’s meeting with Him.’

וַיִּכְנְעוּ עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא-שְׁמִי עֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְפַּלְלוּ וַיִּבְקְשׂוּ פָנַי וַיֵּשְׁבוּ מִדְרָכֵיהֶם הַרְעִים וְאֲנִי
 אֶשְׁמַע מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶסְלַח לְחַטָּאתָם וְאֶרְפָּא אֶת-אֶרְצָם
 Ve-yikàne’u ammi ashèr niqrà shemi aleyhèm ve-yitpalelù v’ibhaqeshù phanày ve-yashùbhu
 mi-darkhèyhem ha-ra’im, va-anì eshmàh min-ha-shamayim, ve-eslàch le-chat’atàm ve-erpàh
 et-artzàm.

If my people, upon whom is my name, submit themselves and pray, and desire my presence-
 face, and turn back from their evil conduct, I will hear from heaven, I will pardon their sins
 and I will heal their land. Second Chronicles 7v14/מב"מ ז"יד

A reflection on 2 Chron.7.14 ‘In the course of this wonderful promise from the service of
 dedication of the Temple of Solomon, the Lord enjoins on His people self-abasement,
 intercession and repentance, but also the seeking of His face, which is the same in Hebrew as
 His presence. Often when these words are used to exhort, there is much focus on humbling
 and praying and repenting, but not so much on just being before His face, in His holy
 presence. God will hear us more easily when we are close up to His face, breathing our
 yearnings directly into His ear.’

Ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ρύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου
 τούτου;

Talàiporos egò ànthropos! Tis me rýsetai ek tou sòmatos tou thanàtou tòutou?

What a man in a crucible am I! Who will rescue me from this mortal body?

Romans/ Προς Ρωμαίους 7.24

A reflection on Romans 7.24 ‘The word Paul uses of himself in this cry of anguish at being
 still in the battle with his sinful old man speaks of one being assayed like gold in the fire.
 Paul is not simply ‘wretched’ or ‘miserable’, for there is a process to this trial; he is in the
 crucible of God, but the outcome is assured – Jesus Christ his Lord has freed him from the
 mortal trap of sin, and from the gravitational pull of death!’

**July 23 2016-2017 Day 205-204 Readings 2 Chronicles 8:11-10:19, Romans 8:9-25,
 Psalm 18:16-36, Proverbs 19:26**

וּבַדְבַר-יוֹם בְּיוֹם לְהַעֲלוֹת כְּמִצּוֹת מֹשֶׁה לְשַׁבָּתוֹת וְלִמְעֻדוֹת שְׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים
 בְּשָׁנָה בַּחַג הַמִּצּוֹת וּבַחַג הַשַּׁבְּעוֹת וּבַחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת
 U-bhidbhàr yom be-yòm le-ha-alòt ke-mìtzvah Moshèh la-shabbatòt ve-le-chadashìm ve-la-
 mo’adòt shalòsh pe-amìm ba-shanàh be-chàg ha-matzòt u-bhe-chàg ha-shavu’òt u-bhe-chàg
 ha-sukkòt.

(Of Solomon's Temple) He appointed the daily pattern of offerings according to the directives of Moses, for seventh day rests, for new moons and for the festivals three times a year, the feast of yeastless bread, the feast of weeks and the feast of shelters.

2 Chronicles 8v13/ג"ח הימים ב

A reflection on 2 Chron.8.13 'Solomon's temple is a new structure in the life of Israel's journey with God, but Solomon sticks with the rhythm of life and worship given to Moses from the heavenly perspective. In our desire to refresh faith and practice in the age of Jesus Christ, we need to keep a clear eye on the first principles and patterns of Scripture, so that we don't stray into humanistic novelty. '

ὁμοῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκί, ἀλλ' ἐν πνεύματι, εἴπερ Πνεῦμα Θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. εἰ δέ τις Πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ.

Υμῆς dhe ouk estè en sarkì, all' en Pnèvmati, èper Pnèvma Theòu ikèe en ymìn. Èe dhe tis Pnèvma Christòu ouk èchee, òutos ouk estin avtòu.

You however are not just physical, but connected to the Spirit, seeing that the Spirit of God is at home in you. But if someone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, then they are not His.

Romans/Ρωμαίους 8.9

A reflection on Romans 8.9 'When the Spirit of Christ is poured into us, we live from another source – from God Himself who inhabits us. It's as though our own inner engine, choked up with pollutants and blockages, has been overridden by an external source of power which now drives us, so that the old mechanism is redundant. This source of power in God is enough not only to give us inner life now, but will be enough to reignite our dead bodies when they finally conk out, giving us a new, Spirit-powered body like that of Jesus after His resurrection.'

משנה רגלי כאילות ועל במתי יעמידני

Meshavèh raglày ka-ayalòt, ve-àl bamotày ya'amidèyni.

He gives my feet their balance, like the deer, enabling me to stand even when I am high up.

Psalm 18.33/תהילים יח"לד

A reflection on Psalm 18.33 'The picture the Singer uses here of God's sustaining power is that of the deer on the high mountain places, where she does not lose her footing because of the Creator's gift to her of balance and equilibrium, even on the heights where men might lose their footing. The Psalm is written about evading the grip of enemies, and delights in God's gift of nimble-footed escape, even on the exposed, high places of life.'

July 24 2013-20167 Day 206-205 Readings 2 Chronicles 11:1-13:22, Romans 8:26-39, Psalm 18:37-50, Proverbs 19:27-29

ובראות יהוה כי נכנעו היה דבר-יהוה אל-שמעיה לאמר נכנעו לא אשחיתם ונתתי להם כמעט לפליטה ולא-תתך חמתי בירושלים ביד-שישק

U-bhi-re'òt Adonài ki nikna'ù, hayàh debhàr Adonài el-Shemayàh lemòr, 'Nikkna'ù lo ashchitem ve-natàti lahèm ki-me'at liphleytàh, ve-lò tittàkh chamatì bi-Yerushalàyim be-yàd Shìshaq.'

When the LORD saw that they were humbling themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah saying, 'They have humbled themselves, so I will not destroy them but will give them a little bit of rescue and my displeasure will not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of (the enemy) Shishaq.'

2 Chronicles 12v7/ז"ב דברי הימים

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 12.7 'While the northern kingdom has separated and gone after worthless non-gods and political separation, the southern kingdom is not doing much better. Rehoboam, son of Solomon, also abandons God's ways and plays fast and loose with the covenant. However, when the Egyptians attack, the leaders of Judah turn to God for help, and through the prophet Shemaiah are told they will get 'a little bit of deliverance'. But overall the Chronicler draws the conclusion that Rehoboam's is an evil regime, because he misleads the people away from the Lord. People bent on power have little regard for the ways of God.'

πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε ζωὴ οὔτε ἄγγελοι οὔτε ἀρχαὶ οὔτε δυνάμεις οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα οὔτε μέλλοντα οὔτε ὕψωμα οὔτε βάθος οὔτε τις κτίσις ἕτερα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

Pèpeesmai gar òti òute thàntos òute zoèe, òute àngeli òute archài, òute dhynàmees, òute enestòta, òute mèllonda, òute ýpsoma òute bhàthos òute tis ktisis etèra dhynèsetai eemàs chorisai apò tees agàpees tou Theòu tees en Christò Yeesòu to Kyriò eemon.

For I am convinced that nothing – not death nor life, angels, princes nor powers, present nor future, not high-up nor low-down, nor anything else in all of creation could ever separate us from the love of God in Messiah Jesus our Lord.

Romans/Ρωμαίους 8.38,39

A reflection on Romans 8.38.39 'Paul has an unshakeable conviction that, whatever the world system or the dark powers behind it throw at him, he is unbreakably anchored into the love of God because of the completed rescue effected by His Messiah, Jesus Christ. We simply rest in this truth, therefore, with Paul and all the people of God, unavailable to all other claims to our attention or allegiance.'

July 25 2017 Day 206 Readings 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14, Romans 9:1-24. Psalm 19:1-14. Proverbs 20:1

וַיִּקְרָא אָסָא אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵין-עִמָּךְ לַעֲזֹר בֵּין רַב לְאִין כַּח עֲזַרְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי-עֲלִיךָ נִשְׁעַנּוּ וּבִשְׁמֶךָ בָּאנוּ עַל-הַהֶמוֹן הַזֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אַתָּה אֵל-יַעֲזָר עִמָּךְ אָנוּ

Va-yiqrà Àsa el-Adonài Elohayv, va-yomèr, 'Adonài, eyn imkhà la-azòr beyn rabh le-èyn kòach; azrèynu Adonài Elohèynu, ki alèykha nish'anu u-bhe-shimkhà bhànu al-hehamòn ha-zèh. Adonài Elohèynu attàh al-ya-atzòr imkhà enòsh.'

Then Asa called out to the Lord his God and said, 'O Lord, it doesn't matter to you whether those you are helping are many or powerless; You are our help, O Lord our God, for we are relying on You, and in Your Name we go are going out against this horde. Lord, You are our God; do not let mankind constrain You!' 2 Chronicles 14v11/י"א דברי הימים

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 14.11 'Asa, King of Judah, has kept covenant with the Lord; now he is faced with an enormous Ethiopian invasion which it is impossible to repulse. Yet this forces him into dependence on the only One who can rescue, the Lord God of Israel.

God's response is miraculous deliverance and salvation of Judah; yet before the end of his reign, Asa forgets this source of hope, and turns to Syria for help against Israel, bringing danger and humiliation upon God's people. We need to keep our eyes fixed constantly on the One on whom we rely, and call on His Name daily.'

ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

On i patères kai ex on o Christòs to katà sàrka, o on epì pàndon Theòs evloyeetòs ees tous aiònas; amèn.

(Paul speaks of his fellow-Jews)

Theirs are the fathers, and from them is Christ, in terms of his physical being, who is over all, blessed be God forever. Amen.

Romans 9.5/ Ρωμαίους 9.5

A reflection on Romans 9.5 'Paul is clear how important the legacy of God's Jewish people is to the person of the Messiah Himself. God has chosen them, and called them, and promised them through Abraham that they would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Jesus is the crown of that story, the culmination of God's story reaching out to all, bringing them into the embrace of His Father and the commonwealth of His beloved.'

July 26 2017 Day 207 Readings 2 Chronicles 17:1-18:34, Romans 9:25-10:13, Psalm 20:1-9, Proverbs 20:2-3

וַיֹּמֶר יְהוֹשָׁפָט אֶל-מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל דַּרְשׁ-נָא כִּי־יִוָּמַר אֶת-דְּבַר יְהוָה

Va-yòmer Yehòshaphat el-mèlekh Yisra'èl, 'Deràsh-na ka-yòm et debhàr Adonài.'

Then Jehoshaphat (King of Judah) said to (Ahab) the King of Israel, ' Let's enquire today what the word of the Lord is.'

[2 Chronicles 18v4/דברי הימים י"ח"ד](#)

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 18.4 'With the simple suggestion of seeking God's word, Jehoshaphat opens up a whole sorry tale. Ahab of Israel complains about Micaiah, the Lord's prophet, that he only ever speaks ill of him. Micaiah is called, and at first goes along with the crowd of other yea-saying voices, but when pressed, he reveals that the battle about to be undertaken will be the end of Ahab. For his pains, Micaiah is imprisoned, but the outcome is as the Lord told him; Jehoshaphat is rescued when he calls on the Lord, Ahab is injured and dies. Ahab's problem of course was not just one word from Micaiah, but his whole life lived with his back to the Lord, while Jehoshaphat puts the Lord's word and wisdom in prime position.'

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὅτι ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκοντα δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβε δικαιοσύνην, δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως, Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς νόμον δικαιοσύνης οὐκ ἔφθασε. διατί; ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων νόμου·
Ti oun eròumen? Òti èthnee ta mee dhìdkonda dhikaiosýneen katèlabhe dhikaiosýneen, dhikaiosýneen dhe teen ek pìsteos, Israèel dhe dhìdkon nòmon dhikaiosýnees ees nòmon dhikaiosýnees ouk èphthase. Dhiatì? Òti ouk ek pìsteos, all' os ex èrgon nòμου.

What are we saying then? That the non-Jewish nations, who were not going after getting right with God, have received right relationship with God, a right relationship based on complete reliance on Him alone. But Israel, trying to get right with God by obeying rules have not achieved it. Why not? Because they didn't rely totally on God, but relied instead on their living by rules.

Romans /Ρωμαίους 9.30-32α

A reflection on Romans 9.30-32 'Paul now leads on by stating that Jews and non-Jews alike are now accepted by God on the basis of trust in God's provision in Christ, while the Jews in the past have sought to be acceptable to God through the carrying out of what was expected anyway of a covenanted people, which they have not been able to fulfil. This has caused them to trip up and fall over the very thing which God has put in place to rescue them, as Paul points out from Isaiah 8.14 and 28.16, because their eyes were on their own doings, and not on God's gracious provision.'

July 27 2017 Day 208 Readings 2 Chronicles 19:1-20:37, Romans 10:14-11:12, Psalm 21:1-13, Proverbs 20:4-6

וישב יהושפט בירושלם וישב ויצא בעם מבאר שבע עד-הר אפרים וישיבם אל-יהוה
אלהי אבותיהם

Va-yèshebh Yehoshaphat bi-Yerùshalayim, va-yashàbh, va-yetzè bha-àm mi-Be'èr Shebhà ad-hàr Ephràyim, va-yashibhèm el-Adonài Elohèy abhotèyhem.

So Jehoshaphat resided in Jerusalem, and then he went out among the people from Beer-Sheba to the Ephraim hills, and he turned them back to the LORD God of their forefathers.

2 Chronicles 19v4/ד"ט כרי הימים ב

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 19.4 'Jehoshaphat's name means 'the Lord will right-wise', and in his action to restore the worship of the true God to Judah, he brings the nation to a turning point. He doesn't do it by issuing an edict from Jerusalem; we are told he personally goes from the south to the north of the kingdom, bringing people back into an encounter with the God of their forefathers. As a result of this, the nation prospers and is delivered.'

וינעץ אל-העם ויעמד משררים ליהוה ומהללים להדרת-קדש--בצאת לפני החלוצ
ואמרים הודו ליהוה כי לעולם חסדו

Va-yivva'atz el-ha-àm, va-ya'amèd meshorerim l'Adonài u-mehalelim le-hadràt qòdesh, be-tzèyt liphnèy hechalùtz ve-omrim, 'Hodù l'Adonài, ki le-olàm chasdò.'

And having consulted the people, he (King Jehoshaphat) set in place singers to the Lord to celebrate the majesty of His unrivalled holiness, going out ahead of the army and declaring 'Give thanks to the Lord, for His covenant-bonded grace is without limit.'

2 Chronicles 20v21/כ"א כרי הימים ב

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 20.21 'In this unprecedented scenario, where a prophetic word from Jahaziel Ben Zechariah has called on the nation of Judah not to fight the Ammonites, but to praise the Lord in the face of their enemies, it is of note, first, that King Jehoshaphat consults with the people. He does not just decree the action to be taken; it is all their lives on the line, and they need to stand in faith together. Then, the singers are sent out ahead of the army, to celebrate the unrivalled (holy) majesty of the Lord and to declare His covenant-bonded grace (His 'chesed') which has no limits. By this alone, they overcome, and see their

enemies fall. Such is the power in the celebration of the unique might of the name of the Lord our Maker!’

πῶς οὖν ἐπικαλέσονται εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν; πῶς δὲ πιστεύσουσιν οὐδὲ οὐκ ἤκουσαν; πῶς δὲ ἀκούσουσι χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος;

Pos oun epikalèsondai ees on ouk epistevsan? Pos dhe pistèvsousin ou ouk èekousan? Pos dhe akòusousi chorìs keerýsontos?

So how will they appeal to Him in whom they have not put their trust? But how can they put their trust in Him if they haven't heard of Him? And how will they hear of Him without someone to proclaim Him to them?

Romans /Ρωμαιοὺς 10.14

A reflection on Romans 10.14 ‘Paul lays out the amazing offer of the good news of God that we can be reconciled with Him; but that good news entails someone bringing it to people and proclaiming it, like a herald bringing a royal proclamation to a people freed from tyranny by the victory of a deliverer. But how, Paul asks, can they hear if those entrusted with the message refuse to proclaim? This grace is too amazing and too wide for us to keep it to ourselves; it is the key to open the prison doors of every person on the planet, for all time!’

רוֹמָה יְהוָה בְּעֶזְרְךָ נְשִׁירָה וְנִזְמְרָה גְבוּרָתְךָ

Rùmah, Adonài ve-uzzèkha; nashìrah u-nezàmrah gebhuratèkha

Be exalted, LORD, in Your strength; we will sing and play music celebrating your might

Psalm 21v13/ג"א תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 21.13 ‘Music and song are an integral feature of the worship of the Lord. From the making of the first instruments by Jubal in Genesis 4.21 to the song of Moses and the Lamb in Revelation 15.3, the praise of God is sung and played by every generation. Indeed, the prophet Zephaniah, in 3.17, tells us that God Himself rejoices over His people with singing. No wonder then, that the Singer here wants to lift up God's name with music and celebratory song, for this is part of the heritage of heaven!’

July 28 2017 Day 209 Readings 2 Chronicles 21:1-23:21, Romans 11:13-36, Psalm 22:1-18, Proverbs 20:7

וַיָּבֹא אֵלָיו מִכְתָּב מֵאֵלֵיהֶוָה הַנְּבִיא לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אֲבִיךָ תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-
הִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוֹשָׁפָט אֲבִיךָ וּבְדַרְכֵי אֲסָא מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה

Va-yabhò elàyv mikhtàbh me-Eliyàhu ha-nabhì, leymòr, 'koh amàr Adonài Elohèy David abhikhà, tàchat ashèr lo-halàkhta be-darkhèy Yehoshaphàt abhikha u-bhe-darkhèy Asà mèlekh-Yehùdah

Now a letter came to him (King Jehoram of Judah) from Elijah the (late) prophet saying, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David, your ancestor: you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, nor in the ways of Asa King of Judah.'

2 Chronicles 21v12/ב"א דכרי הימים

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 21.12 'This is one of those mysteries of Scripture; a letter written years before by the late prophet Elijah is brought to King Jehoram, upbraiding him for his refusal to follow the Lord. Was this written prophetically while Elijah was on earth, or is it a letter from the still living prophet in heaven? What we can know is that God counts it important enough to get Jehoram's attention by writing to him through one of His most famous servants to warn him of the dire consequences of his disobedience.'

᾿Ω βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως Θεοῦ· ὡς ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ.

O bhàthos ploutou kai sophias kai gnòseos Theòu! Os anexerèvneeta ta krimata avtòu kai avexichniasti ai odhì avtòu.

Oh, how deep is the wealth and wisdom and insight of God! His decisions are unfathomable, and His ways are beyond explanation!

Romans /Ρωμαίους 11.33

A reflection on Romans 11.33 ‘It is as though Paul runs out of ways of explaining God’s plans to unite the Jews and the rest of the nations in His plan to rescue both, and he almost sings here in praise of the depth of God’s insight and wisdom, beyond human explanation. Yet there is also the sense that the Lord has all things in His hand, and is unfolding His purposes; the wild olive of the nations will be grafted into the stock of the tree, and the branches of the original tree, the Jews, distanced because of unbelief can also be grown in again – all things are possible, because all things are in His hand.’

July 29 2017 Day 210 Readings 2 Chronicles 24:1-25:28, Romans 12:1-21, Psalm 22:19-31, Proverbs 20:8-10

וְלֹא-זָכַר יוֹאָשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ הַחֲסֵד אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוֹיָדָע אָבִיו עִמוֹ וַיְהַרְגֵהוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי וְכַמּוֹתוֹ אָמַר יְרָא יְהוָה וַיִּדְרֹשׁ

Ve-lò zakhàr Yo’ash ha-mèlekh ha-chèsed ashèr asàh Yehòyada abhìbh immò, va-yaharòg et-benò u-khe-motò amàr, ‘Yer Adonài ve-yidròsh.’

And King Joash did not remember the covenant commitment (chesed) enacted toward him by Jehoiada, (Zechariah the priest’s) father, but killed his son who as he died said, ‘May the LORD see this and vindicate me.’

2 Chronicles 24v22/כב"כ דכרי הימים ב

A reflection on 2 Chron. 24.22 ‘To offend against covenant-bonded commitment as Joash did is to create an issue with God Himself, the One who is ‘rich in covenant-bonded grace and faithfulness.’ One of the greatest issues of Western society is, like Joash’s, its despising of the sacred nature of covenant, breaking faith and leaving a trail of brokenness in its wake.’

ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητεῖαν, κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως

Èchondes dhe charismata katà teen chàrin teen dothèesan eemìn dhiàphora, èete propheetèian, katà teen analogìan tees pìsteos.

So having gifts according to the grace given to us in diversity, if it is prophecy, let that happen according to the level of our faith.

Romans 12.6/ Ρωμαίους 12.6

A reflection on Romans 12.6 ‘The word ‘gift’ in Greek is ‘charisma’, which is derived from the word for ‘grace’, ‘charis’. In communities where we seek to practice the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit, we need to keep in mind that they are always the workings of grace, never allowing them to become tools of judgement or badges of spirituality. These ‘gracelets’ have been given in such diversity, that there is space for everyone to bring their part to the party.

Hearing from God and speaking what we understand Him to be saying is just one of those precious actions of His grace which build up the one body.’

יִזְכְּרוּ וַיָּשֻׁבוּ אֶל-יְהוָה כָּל-אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְפָנָיְךָ כָּל-מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת גּוֹיִם
כִּי לַיהוָה הַמְּלוּכָה וּמִשָּׁל בְּגוֹיִם

Yizkerù ve-yoshùbhu el-Adonài kol àsphey-àretz, ve-yishtachavù le-phanèykha kol
mishpechòt goyim, ki l’Adonài ha-melukhàh u-moshèyl ba-goyim.

Even the furthest parts of the earth will recall and return to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will worship before Your presence-face, for rule and reign over the nations belong to the Lord.

Psalm 22.27,28/ כח"כט

A reflection on Psalm 22.27,28 ‘Whatever systems of self-organisation man devises, and whatever delusions of self-determination he falls into, the Singer of Israel is clear, in this Song which foresees the suffering and glory of Israel’s Messiah; because of His self-donation in sacrifice for all, God as Saviour has been given all rule and reign. The republic of man, the outfall of Babel, is a doomed project; the reign of God is breaking in, with love, hope, justice and meaning, which will culminate in the coming again of Messiah when all things are raised and reconciled.’

July 30 2017 Day 211 Readings 2 Chronicles 26:1-28:27, Romans 13:1-14, Psalm 23:1-6, Proverbs 20:11

וַיִּקְמוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-נָקְבוּ בְשֵׁמוֹת וַיַּחֲזִיקוּ בְשִׁבְיָהּ וְכָל-מַעֲרַמְיָהֶם הִלְבִּישׁוּ מִן-הַשָּׁלָל
וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם וַיַּנְעִלוּם וַיִּשְׁקוּם וַיַּסְכּוּם וַיִּנְהָלוּם בְּחַמְרִים לְכָל-כּוֹשֵׁל וַיְבִיאוּם יְרֵחוֹ עִיר-
הַתְּמָרִים אֶצֶל אַחֵיהֶם וַיָּשׁוּבוּ שְׁמֵרוֹן

Va-yaqumu ha-anashim ashèr niqbhù bhe-shemòt va-yachaziqu bha-shibhyàh ve-khòl
ma’arumèyhem hilbishu min ha-shalàl, va-yalbishum, va-yan’ilum, va-ya’akhilum, va-
yashqum va-yesukhum va-yenahalum ba-chamorim le-khòl koshèyl, va-yebhi’um Yerechò ir
ha-temarim èytzel achèyhem, ve-yashubhu Shomeròn.

So the men previously named got up and took charge of the prisoners and clothed all of them who were naked from their booty; having dressed them and given them footwear, they fed them and gave them drink, protected them with oils and put all of those too weak to walk on donkeys, then took them to Jericho, the City of Palms, beside their countrymen, before returning to Samaria.

[2 Chronicles 28.15/ ט"ח דכרי הימים ב כח"ט](#)

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 28.15 ‘Relations between the northern tribes of Israel and southern tribes of Judah have degraded to such a level that when Israel attacks Judah and captures two hundred thousand hostages, it takes them north with the intention of enslaving them. However, a prophet named Oded warns of the Lord’s anger at their cruel handling of their fellow Jews, and as a result, four men, Azariah, Berekiah, Jehizkiah and Amasa take action to avert judgement on Israel, by giving humanitarian help to the Judah prisoners, providing transport for those unable to walk any further, and returning them back across the border to Jericho, to their home territory. Amidst the terrible outrages catalogued in this part of Scripture, this action shines as a beacon of mercy at a time of great sadness.’

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.
Ee aghàpee to pleesìo kakòn ouk ergàzetai; plèeroma oun nòmou ee aghàpee.

Love does no wrong to a fellow-human; love is therefore the full meaning of the law.
Romans 13.10/ Ρωμαίους 13.10

A reflection on Romans 13.10 ‘**W**hile Paul is here using the Greek language, as a Jew, always in his mind when he speaks of the ‘law’ is the Hebrew word ‘Torah’, primarily the five books of Moses which open the Scriptures. These are far more than mere law. Law is an unlovely structure of limitations, while Torah is the very formation of God from the creation of the world through the covenant with Abraham, the calling of the Patriarchs, the deliverance from Egypt and the encounters in the desert. Certainly within it are what the rabbis discerned as the 613 legal directives, but the overall impact of Torah is that of a parent’s loving instruction to their children. No wonder, then, that Paul says that the whole of this amazing story is summed up in the word ‘agâpee’, the sacrificial, self-giving love sourced in the Father Himself, embodied in His Son and imparted through His Spirit.’

July 31 2017 Day 212 Readings 2 Chronicles 29:1-36, Romans 14:1-23, Psalm 24:1-10, Proverbs 20:12

וַיֹּאמֶר יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים לְלוֹיִם לְהַלֵּל לַיהוָה בְּדַבְרֵי דָוִד וְאַסָּף הַחֹזֶה וַיְהִלְלוּ עַד-
לְשִׁמְחָה וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ

Va-yòmer Yechizkiyàhu ha-mèlekh ve-ha-sarìm la-Levi'im le-hallèl l' Adonài be-dibhrèy David ve-Asàph ha-chozèh, va-yehalelù ad le-simchàh va-yiqdù va-yishtachavù.

Then King Hezekiah and his nobles told the Levites to celebrate before the Lord using the words of David and Asaph the Visionary, so they celebrated with exuberant joy, also bowing and prostrating themselves in worship.

2 [Chronicles 29.30](#) ל"כט"ל דכרי הימים

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 29.30 ‘When King Hezekiah comes to the throne of Judah, after the awful reign of Ahaz, he quickly reinstates the worship of the Lord, cleaning up the Temple, re-engaging the Priests and Levites to worship and sacrifice, bringing hope to the land. Just as we do today, they use the Songs of David and Asaph, (who is called ‘the visionary’ here), acclaiming and celebrating God’s name, bowing and going face-down in worship before Him in their joy – there is no holding back in their commitment to praise!’

οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις. ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ·

Ou gàr-estin ee bhasilèia tou Theou bhròsis kai pòsis, allà dhikaiosýnee kai eerèenee kai charà en Pnèvmati Ayìo.

For God’s reign is not about food and drink, but is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14.18/ Ρωμαίους 14.18

A reflection on Romans 14.18 ‘Paul in this chapter has been asking the Roman believers, who are a mixture of Jews and non-Jews, not to divide over food-laws and observance of feast-days. So often in Jesus’ family we have made walls out of what is not essential to the reign of God in our midst – whether that be Sunday observance, abstinence or not from alcohol or the way we celebrate the Lord’s supper. Paul makes clear that cultural preferences are not to be confused with God’s kingship among us, which is full of purity, peace and joy because the Holy Spirit is at work.’

August 1 2017 Day 213 Readings 2 Chronicles 30:1-31:21, Romans 15:1-22, Psalm 25:1-15, Proverbs 20:13-15

כִּי מִרְבִּית הָעַם רַבַּת מְאֹפְרִים וּמִנְשָׂה יִשְׁשַׁכֵּר וּמִבְּלוֹן לֹא הִטְהָרוּ כִּי-אֶכְלוּ אֶת-
הַפֶּסַח בְּלֹא כִכְתוּב כִּי הִתְפַּלֵּל יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ עֲלֵיהֶם לֵאמֹר יְהוָה הַטּוֹב יִכְפֹּר בְּעַד כָּל-

לָבְבוּ הַכִּין לְדַרוֹשׁ הָאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתָיו וְלֹא כְּטַהַרַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה
אֶל-יַחֲזַקְיָהוּ וַיִּרְפָּא אֶת-הָעָם

Ki marbit ha-àm rabbàt me-Ephràyim, u-Menassèh, Yissachàr u-Zebhulùn lo hitteharù, ki okhlù et-ha-pèsach be-lò kha-katùbh. Ki titpalèl Yechizqiyàhu alèyhem lemòr, ‘Adonài ha-tòbh, yekhappèr be-àd kol lebhobhò hekhìn lidròsh ha-Elohìm Adonài Elohèy abhotàyv, ve-lò ke-taharàt ha-qòdesh.’ Va-yishmà Adonài el-Yechizqiyàhu va-yirpàh et-ha-àm.

For a whole lot of the people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun were not ceremonially clean, so they were eating the Passover in contravention of what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them saying, ‘O LORD, the one who is good, cover over the sin of everyone who has his heart set on seeking the LORD God of their fathers, albeit they are unclean for the holy place’. And the Lord listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

2 Chronicles 30v18-20/ כ"ח י"ח כ"ו

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 30.18-20 ‘King Hezekiah’s grace-filled heart is to be seen here as he appeals to the Lord for dispensation for those who are eating Passover without necessarily being ritually clean. He does not want any of Israel’s tribes to be left out of the blessing of celebrating this Passover which is being enacted in a manner not seen since the days of David and Solomon and God hears his prayer and makes them all ritually whole. The Lord has the power to heal and cleanse, including us.’

ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρώσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν, εἰς τὸ περισσεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐν δυνάμει Πνεύματος Ἁγίου.

O dhe Theòs tees elpidhos pleeròsai ymàs pàsees charàs kai eerèenees en to pistèvin, ees to perisèvin ymàs en tee elpidhi en dhynàmee Pnèvmatos Ayìou.

So may the God of hope fill you with total joy and peace as you trust Him, so that you may be saturated with hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans/Ρωμαίους 15.13

A reflection on Romans 15.13 ‘Paul’s prayer is that they will be filled with the outrageous hope which brings so much joy and peace, so that in turn hope will be produced by the Holy Spirit’s empowering of their lives.’

כָּל-אֲרָחוֹת יְהוָה חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת לְנֹצְרֵי בְרִיתוֹ וְעֵדוֹתָיו

Kol archòt Adonài chèsed ve-emèt le-notzrèy bheritò ve-edotàv.

All the ways of the Lord display bonded grace and authenticity to the keepers of His covenant and His story.

Psalms 25.10/ תהילים כה"א

A reflection on Psalm 25.10 ‘Because the themes of His covenant and His story are so integral to knowing and encountering the Lord, all those who keep going deeper in His unfolding narrative of promise find constant evidences of His covenant-sealed, bonded grace and authenticity revealed through it.’

August 2 2017 Day 214 Readings 2 Chronicles 32:1-33:13, Romans 15:23-16:9, Psalm 25:16-22, Proverbs 20:16-18

עָמוּ זָרוּעַ בְּשָׂר וְעַמְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְעֲזָרְנוּ וְלִהְיוֹת לָנוּ מִלְחָמָתָנוּ וַיִּסְמְכוּ הָעָם עַל-דָּבָרֵי
יַחֲזַקְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה

Immò zeròà basàr, ve-immànù Adonài Elohèynu le-azrèynu u-le-hillachèm milchamotènu va-yismakhù ha-àm al-dibhrèy Yechizqiyàhu, mèlekh Yehudàh.

‘He (Sennacherib of Assyria) may have a muscled arm, but the Lord our God is our help to fight our battles’ and the people put their trust in the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah.

2 Chronicles 32.8/ח"ב לברי הימים ב

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 32.8 ‘The pagan King of Assyria, Sennacherib, is filling the airwaves with his propaganda warning the people of Judah not to rely on their God. After all, the non-gods of the other nations have not been able to halt the Assyrian war-machine in its advance; why should tiny Judah’s deity be any different? But Hezekiah, the covenanted, godly ruler in the line of David, reminds the people whom they serve and whose they are – the Lord God, who has delivered them so often before. The people reject the vaunting broadcasts of the pagan and commit to Hezekiah’s words of hope and faith. The outcome is miraculous deliverance for Judah and failure for the boasting, godless Assyrian.’

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Πνεύματος συναγωνίσασθαι μοι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, ἵνα ῥυσθῶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπειθούντων ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ ἵνα ἡ διακονία μου ἢ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ εὐπρόσδεκτος γένηται τοῖς ἁγίοις

Parakalò dhe ymàs, adhelphì, dhià tou Kyriou eemòn Yeesòu Christòu kai dhià tees ayàpees tou Pnèvmatos synagonìsas-thài-mi en tais prosevchàis ypèr emòu pros ton Theòn, ìna rysthò apò ton apithòndon en tee Youdhàia kai ina dhiakonìa mou ee ees Yerousalèm evpròsdhektos yèneetai tis ayì-ees.

So I am requesting of you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit that you wrestle alongside me in praying for me to God that He will rescue me from the faithless ones in Judaea so that my ministry that takes me to Jerusalem will also be well received by the holy people there.

Romans/Rῶμαιους 15.30,31

A reflection on Romans 15.30,31 ‘Paul knows the indispensable key prayer is in the unfolding of God’s purposes in his life, and he appeals to his readers in Rome to wrestle alongside him in calling on God as he prepares for his decisive trip to Jerusalem, where he knows his life is at risk. Just as Jacob wrestled with God at Peniel, and would not let go until he received God’s word for him, we are called to wrestle, to exert ourselves in pursuing God’s face; this uncovers to God our commitment to His call and purpose, which in Jesus and in the love of the Spirit He has already destined us for.’

August 3 2017 Day 215 Readings 2 Chronicles 33:14-34:33, Romans 16:10-27, Psalm 26:1-12, Proverbs 20:19

ויעל המלך בית-יהוה וכל-איש יהודה וישבי ירושלם והכהנים והלויים וכל-העם מגדול ועד-קטן ויקרא באזניהם את-כל-דברי ספר הברית הנמצא בית יהוה

Va-ya'al ha-mèlekh beyt-Adonài ve-khòl ish Yehùdah ve-yoshebhèy Yerushalàyim ve-ha-kohanìm ve-ha-Levi'im ve-khòl ha-àm mi-gaddòl ve-àd qatàn, va-yiqràh be-oznèyhem et-kòl dibhrèy sèpher ha-berit ha-nimtzàh beyt Adonài.

And the King (Josiah) went up to the house of the Lord, with every man of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites, and with all the people from the greatest to the least, and he read in their hearing the words of the book of the covenant found in the house of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 34.30/ל"ל דברי הימים ב

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 34.30. 'It seems strange to us, for whom books are commonplace, to think that such an important writing as the Scriptures of Israel could have been lost in the temple; but such scrolls were rare and kept in safety, and with the idolatry of the previous generations, the use of the Scriptures had been lost. Here, King Josiah, having discovered the ancient works, and having realised how Judah has compromised her story with God her Saviour, wants everyone to hear the foundational words God has spoken to them, to allow once again their deep message to touch everyone's heart. As a result, they renew the covenant before the Lord. The scrolls would not have been put aside again in Josiah's reign, at least. We have that same privilege of reading God's story today; are we enriching our lives with those words, or have we laid them aside for other pursuits?'

ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν Κυρίῳ.

Aspàzomai ymàs egò Tèrtios, o gràpsas teen epistolèen en Kyriò.

I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, send my greetings in the Lord.

Romans/Ρωμαίους 16.22

A reflection on Romans 16.22 'Every so often in the Scriptures, we come across something obscure which transports us into the very moment of their writing. We know Paul had amanuenses, professional scribes, to write down his letters; parchment was expensive, and needed to be handled with skill, which Paul did not feel he had. In this short verse at the end of Romans, we come face to face with Tertios, Paul's scribe here, who actually adds his own greeting to those of the apostle to the believers in Rome. Here is the authenticity of the Bible, an unedited moment in time, where the very writer, otherwise unknown and unsung, records his own words which two thousand years later we may read and smile at in wonder.'

August 4 2017 Day 216 Readings 2 Chronicles 35:1-36:23, 1 Corinthians 1:1-17, Psalm 27:1-6, Proverbs 20:20-21

למלאות דבר-יהוה בפי ירמיהו עד-רצתה הארץ את-שבתותיה כל-ימי השמה שבתה
למלאות שבועים שנה

Le-malo'òt debhàr-Adonài be-phì Yirmeyàhu, ad-ratztàh ha-àretz et-shabtotèyha, kol yemèy ha-shàmmah shabhtàh, le-malo'òt shibh'im shanàh

In fulfilment of the word of the LORD in the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its full rest-day Sabbaths, through all the days of its desolation, it rested, to the full tally of seventy years

Second Chronicles 36v21/ דברי הימים לו"כא

A reflection on 2 Chronicles 36.21 'Things could have been very different for God's people Israel as they dwelt in His land. He had promised them that if they rested the land once each seven years, He would provide a harvest for them which not only grew of itself, but also produced enough for the next year as well. Yet they went instead after the non-gods of

fertility, the Ba'alim and the Ashtoreths. But God makes sure that the land now has its Sabbath, as for seventy years the people are removed forcibly from the region in exile. '

μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν; ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε;

Memèristai o Christòs? Mee Pàvlos estavròthee ypèr ymòn? Ee ees to ònoma Pavlòu ebhaptìsthe?

Is Christ divided? Or was Paul crucified for you? Or were you immersed into Paul's name?
1 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Α 1.13

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 1.13 'Paul's pointed questioning of the Corinthians over their doctrinal splits resounds to us still, to us who have so squabbled and fought and even killed in Christ's name those who diverge from us in their understanding of the faith of Jesus. The answer to Paul's question is obvious; Christ is not divided, no stream or denominational leader was crucified for us and it is into Christ's name alone that we are all immersed. Scripture witnesses against us in our stubborn refusal to worship with those who do not agree with our faction. We need as a whole family of Jesus to turn from our arrogance and embrace one another, wherever He is pouring out His Holy Spirit in new life. By this we will fulfil His prayer to the Father for our being one in Him.'

אַחַת שְׂאֲלֵתִי מֵאֵת-יְהוָה אֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ שִׁבְחֵתִי בְּבֵית-יְהוָה כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּי לַחַזוֹת בְּנַעַם-יְהוָה
וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלוֹ

Achàt sha'alti meyèt Adonài, otàh abhaqèsh; shibhtì be-bhèyt Adonài kol yemèy chayày, la-chazòt be-no'am Adonài, u-le-bhaqèr be-heykhalò.

One thing I have asked for from the Lord, this is what I desire; to stay in the Lord's house all the days of my life, to gaze into the splendour of the Lord, to explore His residence.

Psalms 27.4/ד"ד כ"ז תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 27.4 'The Singer sings of one thing that is his passion, the connection with the presence of the Lord which he desires to be the main event of his life. Jesus uses the term 'one thing' when He is addressing Martha's stress in Luke 10.41 – 'Martha, only one thing is actually necessary...', that which her sister Mary had chosen, to immerse herself in gazing into Jesus' face, drinking in His words of life. Whatever we give ourselves to, only one thing is necessary – to be saturated with the cloud of His delight and beauty, which transforms everything else we do.'

August 5 2017 Day 217 Readings Ezra 1:1-2:70, 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, Psalm 27:7-14, Proverbs 20:22-23

ἡμεῖς δὲ κηρύσσομεν Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον, Ἰουδαίοις μὲν σκάνδαλον, Ἑλλησι δὲ μωρίαν, αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς, Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἑλλησι, Χριστὸν Θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ Θεοῦ σοφίαν·

Eemis dhe keerýssomen Christòn estàvromenon, Youdhàiees men skàndhalon, Èlleesi dhe morìan, avtìs dhe tees kleetìs, Youdhàios te kai Èlleesi, Christòn Theòu dhýnamin kai Theòu sophìan.

But we proclaim the crucified Messiah; yes, offensive to the Jews and nonsense to the Greeks, but to those invited, whether Jew or Greek, Messiah is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Α 1.23,24

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 1.23,24 'However cleverly and persuasively the good news of life unlimited through Messiah Jesus is presented, it will always be offensive to some and nonsense to others, because its logic is only discernible when the Holy Spirit of God is at work making Him known in the moment. To those who open their heart to the invitation, this

crazy, incredible story releases the energy of heaven which plugs us into the deep insight of God, and transforms our whole being. The Spirit's work through our words is the key to God breaking in.'

קוֹה אֶל-יְהוָה חֲזַק וַיֵּאמֶץ לִבְךָ וְקוֹה אֶל-יְהוָה

Kavvèh el-Adonài, chazàq ve-ya'amètz libbèkha, ve-kavvèh el-Adonài

Hope in the LORD, be strong and embolden your heart, and hope in the LORD

Psalm 27v14/תהילים כז"יד

A reflection on Psalm 27.14 'The word 'to hope' in Hebrew has within it a sense of expectancy and of endurance. This is not an invitation to wish, but to expect. It calls for boldness and courage, as the Singer exhorts his hearer to maintain that hope for the Lord, even when storms come, because His promise is certain.'

August 6 2017 Day 218 Readings Ezra 3:1-4:23, 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:4, Psalm 28:1-9, Proverbs 20:24-25

וַיִּכְנֹוּ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַל-מְכוֹנֹתָיו כִּי בְּאֵימָה עָלִיָּהֶם מַעֲמֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת וַיַּעֲלוּ עֲלָיו עֲלוֹת לַיהוָה עֲלוֹת לְבָקֶר וְלָעֶרֶב

Ve-yakhìnu hamizbè-ach al mekhonotàv ki be'èmah alèyhem me-amèy ha-artzòt, ve-ya'alù alòt l'Adonài, alòt la-bòqer ve-la'àrebh

And they set up the altar on its pedestals, despite their fear of the peoples of the territories around, and they offered up the offerings to the LORD, the offerings for morning and for evening

Ezra 3v3/ עזרא ג"ג

A reflection on Ezra 3.3: 'When a period has elapsed to allow people to get settled in to their homes, everyone comes 'as one man' to Jerusalem. Jeshua Ben Jozadak leads the priests, and Zerubbabel Ben Shealtiel the people, and they set to work with the building of the altar first, so that sacrifice can recommence in accordance with Torah. This happens even before the foundations of the new temple have been laid.'

ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ· μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἔστι, καὶ οὐ δύναται γνῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται.

Psychikòs dhe ànthropos ou dhèchetai ta tou Pnèvmatos tou Theòu; morìa gar avtò èsti, kai ou dhýnatai gnònai, oti pneumatikòs anakrìnetai.

So man living just from his own psyche cannot accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are stupidity to him, and he is not able grasp them, for they are rightly evaluated only with the perspective of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2. 14/Κορινθίους Α 2.14

A reflection on 1 Cor. 2.14 'Paul says in 1 Cor. 2.8 that if the rulers of the age had been able to reason out Jesus and his kingdom of love by their own cleverness, they would never have crucified him. The crucifixion, says Paul, is proof that human cleverness fails when it comes to getting a handle on Jesus Christ. Rather, Paul says here at the end of chapter 2, we need the Holy Spirit. Only He, with His presence and light, can make any sense of the story of the cross and resurrection. In 2.12, Paul says, we are not working out of the spirit of the world, the cleverness of men, but out of the Spirit of God, who really knows God, because He is God.'

יְהוָה עֲזִי וּמִגְנִי בּוֹ בָטַח לִבִּי וְנִעְזַרְתִּי וַיַּעֲלֵז לִבִּי וּמִשִּׁירֵי אֲהוֹדֶנּוּ

Adonài uzzi u-maginnì; bo bhatach libbì, ve-ne'ezàrti; vaya'alòz libbì u-mishirì ahodènnu

The LORD is my strength and my shield, on Him my heart has relied and I have been helped; my heart jumps for joy and in song I will thank Him.

תהילים כח"ז/28v7 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 28.7 'This is a Psalm of two halves; up until this point, the Singer has been crying out for rescue, and now the tone changes to one of ecstatic joy at God's deliverance. His heart is jumping for joy, and he just has to express his praise in song. When God breaks out in rescue, we cannot but break out in celebration!'

מִיְהוָה מִצְעָדֵי-גִבֹר וְאָדָם מֵה-יָבִין דָּרְכוּ

Mey-Adonài mitz'adèy gábher, ve-adàm mah yabhìn darkò?

The progress of man comes from the Lord; how then can humanity discern their own pathway?

משלי כ"ד/20.24 Proverbs

A reflection on Proverbs 20.24 'The Sage of Israel points to the Lord in this proverb as the source of all human progress, of every step forward mankind takes. How is it possible, then, he asks, for humanity to be able to work out their own way forward without Him? We come back again to that deep principle of Scripture, that without our being in awe of the Lord who put us together, there is no true insight and wisdom.'

August 7 2017 Day 219 Readings Ezra 4:24-6:22, 1 Corinthians 3:5-23, Psalm 29:1-11, Proverbs 20:26-27

וְאֵלֹהָ דֵי שָׁכַן שְׁמָהּ תַּמָּה יִמְגַר כָּל-מֶלֶךְ וְעַם דֵי יִשְׁלַח לְהַשְׁנִיָּה לְחַבְּלָה בֵּית-אֵלֹהָ דֵי בִירוּשָׁלַם אָנָּה דְרִיּוֹשׁ שְׁמַת טַעַם אֶסְפְּרָנָא יִתְעַבֵּד

Ve-Elahà di shakkàn shemèh tàm mah yemagàr kol-mèlekh ve-àm di yishlàch le-hashnayàh le-chabbalàh beyt Elahà dekh di b'Irushlèm anà Daryàvesh samèt te'èm asparnà yit-abhìd And may God who has made His name dwell there overthrow every king and people who raises a hand to deface or harm this same house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius make this decree; let it be speedily enacted

עזרא ו"ב/6v12 Ezra

A reflection on Ezra 6.12: 'On Darius' command, a search of the archives is made, and Cyrus' original decree comes to light, confirming the permission for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. On the basis of this, Darius warns Tattenai and Shethar-Bozenai to stop hindering the Jews in their work, rather they are to see that the Jews receive the royal funding needed to complete the work! He lays on the Jews, however, to pray for the King's wellbeing – Darius sees this as an opportunity to keep in with whatever god is in his empire! Thus, God turns around a threat of oppression into the protection of His people.'

יְהוָה עַז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת-עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם

Adonài oz la-ammò yittèn, Adonài yebharèkh et-ammò bha-shalòm.

The Lord will give strength to His people, the Lord will bless His people with wellbeing.

תהילים כט"א/29.11 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 29.11 'The strength and resilience God's people have comes not from their own self-possession, but from the One whose they are; He bends towards them in blessing and fulfils them, imparting that 'shalom' which is more than just peace, but is also wellbeing, wholeness and health; what a heritage from the Lord His people enjoy!'

August 8 2017 Day 220 Readings Ezra 7:1-8:20, 1 Corinthians 4:1-21, Psalm 30:1-12, Proverbs 20:28-30

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן כְּזֹאת בְּלִבְ הַמֶּלֶךְ לְפָאֵר אֶת-בֵּית יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם

Barùkh Adonài Elohèy abhotèynu ashèr natàn ka-zòt be-lèybh ha-mèlekh le-pha'èr et-bèyt Adonài ashèr bi-Yerushalàyim.

Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers for putting something like this in the heart of the king, to restore the house of the Lord in Jerusalem to its former glory.

Ezra 7v27/ז"ז ארזא

A reflection on Ezra 7.27 'Ezra blesses the Lord after quoting in the original Aramaic the decree of King Artaxerxes I, which augments Cyrus' earlier permission for the Jews' rebuilding of the Temple, now supplying them with all they need to continue. In his blessing, Ezra acknowledges it is the Lord who has inspired this thought in the king's heart, showing God once again to be the Overseer of human history.'

ἡμεῖς μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ· ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰσχυροί· ὑμεῖς ἔνδοξοι, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτιμοι.

Eemèes mori dhià Christòn, ymèes dhe phrònimi en Christò; eemèes asthenèes, ymèes dhe ischyri; ymèes èndhoxi, eemèes dhe àtimi.

We are treated as morons because of Christ, while you in Christ are clever; we are seen as weak, while you are strong; you are seen as splendid, while we are dishonoured.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθους A 4.10

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 4.10 'Paul takes the Corinthian believers to task over their assessment of themselves as really quite something. They have divided themselves up politically into 'denominations' and are proud of their spirituality, but Paul provokes them to think again. While they are promoting their own intelligence, power and honour, Paul and his fellow emissaries of the King of Kings are scorned, abased and despised. The modern church so often complains that it does not have the place it once had in society, seeking again its influence and control. Yet Paul invites us to step down from the plinths we have built, to come alongside him, sharing Christ's own rejected way, the way of the crown, not of jewels but of thorns.'

August 9 2017 Day 221 Readings Ezra 8:21-9:15, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Psalm 31:1-8, Proverbs 21:1-2

כי בשתי לשאול מן-המלך חיל ופראשים לעזרנו מאויב בדרך כי-אמרנו למלך לאמר יד-אלהינו על-כל-מבקשיו לטובה ועזו ואפו על כל-עזביו

Ki bhoshtì lish'òl min-ha-mèlekh chàyil u-pharashim le-azrèynu me-oyèv ba-dàrekh, ki-amàrnu la-mèlekh lemòr, yad Elohèynu al-kol-mebhakeshàv le-tobhàh ve-uzzò ve-appò al-kol-ozbhàv

For I was embarrassed to ask of the king troops and cavalry to protect us from attack on the road, because we had said to the king that the hand of our God was with all those who sought Him to do them good, while His might and His anger was against those who forsake Him

Ezra 8v22/זכב ארזא

A reflection on Ezra 8.22: 'The Jewish returnees pray and fast before setting out, seeking a safe passage. Ezra has told the King that God will protect them on the journey, so they are not protected with any cavalry or defensive force. This is a major miracle, given the large amount of treasure and provisions they are carrying with them through open country!'

ἐκκαθάρατε οὖν τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην, ἵνα ἦτε νέον φύραμα, καθὼς ἐστε ἄζυμοι. καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός·

Ekkathàrate oun teen palaiàn zýmeen, ìna ète vèon phyrama, kathòs-este àzymi. Kai gar to pàscha eemòn ypèr eemòn etýthee Christòs.

So clean out the old stuff with any yeast in it, so that you can be a brand new batch of dough. For also, Messiah our Passover lamb has been slaughtered for us.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθους Α 5.7

A reflection on 1 Cor. 5.7 ‘Paul is addressing the rank sexual sin the church in Corinth is tolerating in their midst, and to illustrate his recommended action, he points to the traditions of Passover, in particular, the cleaning through of a house to get rid of all fermented and yeasted products on the night before unleavened bread is eaten for seven days. He has in mind Jesus’ references to yeast as a picture of the toxic nature of sin (Matt.16.11), and calls them to be a new, unyeasted kind of dough, for they now live in the era of eternal Passover, Jesus, the Messiah, lamb of God, having been slaughtered and given for the sins of the world.’

August 10 2017 Day 222 Readings Ezra 10:1-44, 1 Corinthians 6:1-20, Psalm 31:9-18, Proverbs 21:3

וְכַהֲתַפְּלֵל עֲזָרָא וְכַהֲתוֹדֹתוֹ בְּכָה וּמִתְנַפֵּל לְפָנָי בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים נִקְבְּצוּ אֵלָיו מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל קָהָל
רב-מֵאֲדָר אֲנָשִׁים וְנָשִׁים וְיֻלְדִים כִּי-בָכּוּ הָעָם הַרְבֵּה-בְּכָה

U-khe-hitpalèl Ezrà u-khe-hitvadotò bokhèh u-mitnapèl liphnèy beyt ha-Elohìm, niqbetzù elàyv mi-Yisra’èl qahàl rabh-mé’òd, anashim ve-nashìm, viladim, ki bhakhù ha-àm harbèh bhekhèh.

And as Ezra was praying, and confessing with weeping and falling down in front of God’s house, a huge number of the people of Israel assembled to him, men, women and children, with lots of weeping and sobbing.

Ezra 10.1/עֲזָרָא י"א

A reflection on Ezra 10.1 ‘Tears tend to be wrongly seen in our culture as weakness; yet in the Scriptures, they are a sign of humble hearts and passionate souls. As Ezra cries out to the Lord for the restoration of God’s people in their holiness, with weeping, a great crowd assembles, men, women and children moved to their hearts by their desperate need of God’s presence. When the Spirit of God speaks into our lives, our emotions are not left in cold storage, but are fully engaged as part of our being as whole people. Indeed, Psalm 56.8 tells us that God keeps a record of our tears as evidence of our seeking after Him.’

ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐστίν, οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐαυτῶν;

Ee ouk idhate òti to sòma ymòn naòs tou en ymìn Ayìou Pnèvmatòs-estin, ou èchete apò Theòu, kai ouk estè eavtòn.

Don’t you realise that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit in you, whom you have received from God, and that you don’t belong to yourselves?

1 Corinthians/Κορινθους Α 6.19

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 6.19 ‘With all the modern talk of our human rights, for the most part, as Jesus’ people we don’t take seriously this reality that our lives are forfeit to God and that we are now the possession of the Holy Spirit, being bought with the blood of Christ. Paul talks of us in Romans 6.18 as ‘slaves of righteousness’, having no right to choose evil. He now develops that theme, making us see that our physical being is as much a part of Christ as our spiritual. We are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are available to no other power or force.’

August 11 2017 Day 223 Readings Nehemiah 1:1-3:14, 1 Corinthians 7:1-24, Psalm 31:19-24, Proverbs 21:4

וְאֶגִּיד לָהֶם אֶת-יְדֹ אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר-הָיָא טוֹבָה עָלַי וְאֶף-דְּבָרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אָמַר-לִי
וַיֹּאמְרוּ נִקּוּם וּבְנִינוּ וַיַּחֲזְקוּ יְדֵיהֶם לְטוֹבָה

Va-agid lahèm et-yàd Elohay ashèr hi tobhàh alày, ve-àph dibhrèy ha-mèlekh ashèr amàr li va-yomrù ‘naqùm u-bhaninu’ va-yechàzqu yedèyhem la-tobhàh.

And I shared with them (the returned Jews) how the hand of the Lord was upon me for good, and also what the king had said to me, and they said, ‘Let’s get on and build, then’, and they took strength in their hands for the good.

Nehemiah 2.18/ נחמיה ב"ח

A reflection on on Nehemiah 2.18: ‘Without declaring his intentions, Nehemiah does a night inspection of the state of the city’s defences. He says nothing to any of the local government officials of his plans. Nehemiah proceeds to put his programme of rebuilding works to the local leaders, and backs it up with the royal support he has received.’

ὁ γὰρ ἐν Κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος Κυρίου ἐστίν· ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλός ἐστι Χριστοῦ. τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων.

O gar en Kyriò kleethès dhùulos apelèvtheros Kyriou estin; omìos kai o elèvtheros kleethès dhùulos-estì Christòu. Timèes egoràseesthe; mee yìnesthe dhùli anthròpon.

For anyone called by the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freed person; likewise, anyone called while a free citizen is actually a slave of Christ. You were purchased at a price; don’t let yourselves be enslaved to any other person.

1 Corinthians/Kορινθους A 7.22-23

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 7.22-23 ‘Paul turns upside-down the class systems of this world; he tells the slave to regard themselves as free in the Lord, and the free citizen to reckon themselves as a slave to Christ. He follows this up by reminding his brothers and sisters that they cannot reckon themselves slaves to any human, for they are captive to the love of Christ, purchased by His redemption by blood. Paul infers here that is possible to be free in spirit even when we are bound in body, and conversely, to be bound in spirit even when we call ourselves free. Only in Christ are we at one and the same time free while yoked in service to Him.’

August 12 2017 Day 224 Readings Nehemiah 3:15-5:13, 1 Corinthians 7:25-40, Psalm 32:1-11, Proverbs 21:5-7

וַיִּמְלֶךְ לִבִּי עָלַי וְאֶרִיבָה אֶת-הַחֲרִים וְאֶת-הַסְּגָנִים וְאֶמְרָה לָהֶם מִשָּׂא אִישׁ-בְּאָחִיו
אֲתָם נֹשְׂאִים (נֹשִׂים) וְאֲתַן עֲלֵיהֶם קִהְלָה גְדוֹלָה

Va-yimmalèkh libbì alài va-aribhàh et-ha-chorim ve-et-ha-seganim va-omràh lahèm ‘Mashàh ish be-achiv nosim’; ve-ettèn alèyhem qehillah gedolàh.

Having thought it over, I brought a case against the nobility and the rulers, saying to them, ‘You are charging interest on loans to your brother (Jews)’; and I gathered a large protest group against them.

Nehemiah 5.7/ נחמיה ה"ז

A reflection on on Nehemiah 5.7 ‘When Nehemiah finds out that the rich elite have been making loans to their poorer brother-Jews with interest, causing them great hardship, he takes action. He takes them to task before a gathering of the people, accusing them of acting contrary to the law of Moses by charging interest on loans. As a result, the nobility and rulers

relent and release the poor from their bonds, making a public oath before the priest that they will not extort from the needy again.’

Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν Κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω· γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἠλεημένος ὑπὸ Κυρίου πιστός εἶναι.

Perì dhe ton parthènon, epitayèen Kyriou ouk ècho; gnòmeen dhe dhìdhomi os eele-eemènos ypò Kyriou pistòs èenai.

Now on the matter of unmarried women, I have no directive from the Lord; but I give my opinion as one who has been favoured by the Lord to be reliable.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθους Α 7.25

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 7.25 ‘Having shared in the first part of the chapter on the situation of married people, Paul now shares his thoughts about the singles, particularly the young women. He makes clear that this is not a directive from the Lord (perhaps he realises how dogmatic the Corinthians can become around their human teachers!) , but an opinion from one whom the Lord has graced with some insight on various matters. There is a care in Paul in what follows to leave room for different outcomes, with all done out of love for Christ, valuing both the single and married gift equally.’

August 13 2017 Day 225 Readings Nehemiah 5:14-7:73, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Psalm 33:1-11, Proverbs 21:8-10

וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ כָל-אֹיְבֵינוּ וַיֵּרְאוּ כָל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי מֵאֵת אֱלֹהֵינוּ נַעֲשֶׂתָהּ הַמְּלָאכָה הַזֹּאת

Va-yehì ka'ashèr shama'ù kol-oyebhèynu va-yire'ù kol-ha-goyìm ashèr sebbibhotèynu, va-yiplù me'òd be-eynèyhem va-yede'ù ki me-èt Elohèynu ne'estàh ha-mel'akhàh ha-zòt

And so it was that when all our enemies heard and all the peoples around us saw this, they went way down in their own estimation because they realised that we had done all this work with God's involvement

Nehemiah 6v16/ נחמיה ו"טז

A reflection on Nehemiah 6.16: ‘The wall is completed; the enemies are discredited and give up, realising that the Lord has been helping in this great work. When we push through with God, the opposition cannot overwhelm us.’

καὶ γὰρ εἶπερ εἰσὶ λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὥσπερ εἰσὶ θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί, ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς Θεὸς ὁ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ.

Kai gar èeper eesì legòmeni theì èete en ouranò èete epì tees yees, òsper eesì theì pollì kai kýri-ee pollì, all eemìn ees Theòs o patèer, ex ou ta pànda kai eemèes eis avtòn, kai ees Kýrios Yeesòus Christòs, dhi ou ta pànda kai eemèes dhi'avtòu.

For though there are entities said to be gods, whether in heaven or on earth, (since there are many so-called gods and lords), yet for us there is just one God the Father, from whom all things derive, and we belong to Him, likewise one Lord Jesus, Messiah, because of whom all things exist, including us.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθους Α 8.5,6

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 8.5,6 ‘In Paul’s era, the followers of the Way, the Jesus people, became objectionable for their insistence that there was only one, unseen, Creator God, rejecting the plethora of Greek and Roman (and Babylonian and Persian) non-gods. The Romans had been very adept in their conquests at subsuming local idols into their pantheon of powers, thus keeping peace and keeping local sensibilities appeased. However, the new

But in Your great compassion, You did not bring them to an end, and You did not forsake them, for You are God, kind and compassionate.

Nehemiah 9.31/נחמיה ט"ל"א

A reflection on Nehemiah 9.31 'Our human tendency is always to excuse our evil bent, vilifying God for His right assessment of us. Here, the returnees from exile retell the story of God's people from their calling in Abraham, and recognise their hard-hearted, stiff-necked waywardness toward this God who, through it all, has determined not to finish them off but to stay true to His own covenant and promised grace, despite their crooked behaviour, redeeming them by His unassuaged love.'

πειρασμὸς ὑμᾶς οὐκ εἴληφεν εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος· πιστὸς δὲ ὁ Θεός, ὃς οὐκ ἐάσει ὑμᾶς πειρασθῆναι ὑπὲρ ὃ δύνασθε, ἀλλὰ ποιήσει σὺν τῷ πειρασμῷ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν, τοῦ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς ὑπενεγκεῖν.

Peerasmos ymàs ouk èleephen ee mee anthròpinos; pistòs dhe o Theòs, o ouk èasi ymàs peerasthèenai ypèr o dhýnasthe, allà pièsee syn to peerasmò kai teen èkbhasin, tou dhýnasthai ymàs ypenenkèen.

There is no testing that you have gone through which is not common to humanity; God can be trusted, and He will not allow you to be tested beyond what you can bear, but along with that trial He will also give you a way out so you are able to cope with it.

1 Corinthians 10.13/Κορινθους Α 10.13

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 10.13 'Our lives are all subject to testing and trying, like gold in a fire. Sometimes the fire in the crucible seems hotter than we can imagine or bear; but Paul reminds us, first that our experience is commonly human but then that God is not going to break us, and will provide a way out for us. In any time of trial, when the fire is keen, we can hold on to our Father's hand and know he loves us through it.'

August 16 2017 Day 228 Readings Nehemiah 11:1-12:26, 1 Corinthians 10:14-33, Psalm 34:11-22, Proverbs 21:14-16

כִּי-מִצְוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ עָלֵיהֶם וְאִמְנָה עַל-הַמְשֻׁרְרִים דְּבַר-יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ

Ki mitzvàh ha-mèlekh alèyhem va-amànah al ha-meshorerim debhàr yom be-yomò.

For the King's directive about them was for an allowance for the singers to be given every day.

Nehemiah 11.23/נחמיה יא"כג

A reflection on Nehemiah 11.23 'The importance of the praise and worship established in the restored temple of the time of Nehemiah is this instruction which comes from the king himself for the singers to be given a daily allowance, so that they can give themselves to the music and song for which they were anointed and called.'

τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστὶ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστὶν;

To potèerion tees evloyias o evlogòumen, oochi kinonìa tou àimatos tou Christòu estì? Ton àrton on klòmen, oochi kinonìa tou sòmatos tou Christòu?

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 10.16/Κορινθους Α 10.16

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 10.16 ‘Whatever doctrine or dogma we hold on the nature of the bread and wine in the eucharist, we see unequivocally in Paul that this food of blessing draws into the very body and blood of Christ in a way which Jesus already envisaged in John 6. Unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood, He says, we can have no part in Him. He has left these simple elements of bread and wine which, by the action of His Holy Spirit, become for us the currency of the Kingdom, bearers of His salvation promises, just as any banknote bears the promise of its value in gold.’

August 17 2017 Day 229 Readings Nehemiah 12:27-13:31, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, Psalm 35:1-16, Proverbs 21:17-18

וַיִּזְבְּחוּ בַיּוֹם-הַהוּא זְבָחִים גְּדוֹלִים וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כִּי הֶאֱלֹהִים שָׂמְחָם שְׂמֵחָה גְדוֹלָה וְגַם הַנָּשִׁים
וְהַיְלָדִים שְׂמְחוּ וַתִּשְׁמַע שְׂמֵחַת יְרוּשָׁלַם מֵרְחוֹק

Va-yizbechù ba-yòm ha-hù zebhachìm gedolìm, va-yismechù ki ha-Elohìm simchàm simchàh gedolàh, ve-gam ha-nashìm ve-ha-yeladìm samechù va-tishamà simchàt Yerushalàyim mé-rachòq.

And that day they made great sacrifices and celebrated, for God had released great joy upon them, so that the women and children were included in the celebrations, and the sound of Jerusalem partying was heard from far away.

Nehemiah 12.43/נחמיה יב"מג

A reflection on Nehemiah 12.43 ‘In spite of the opposition, the returnees of Judah have completed the restoration of the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem, and they take time for dedication (the Hebrew word *chànukkah* is used here) of the finished work, with sacrifice and celebration. The word for rejoicing here is *simchàh*, a God-given, active, exuberant joy, which entails such a level of noisy expression that Jerusalem’s partying can be heard a long way off!’

πλὴν οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς ἐν Κυρίῳ· ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτω καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός, τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Pleen òute anèer chorìs gynaikòs òute gynèe chorìs andròs en Kyriò; òsper gar ee gynèe ek tou andròs, òuto kai o anèer dhia tees gynaikòs, ta dhe pànda ek tou Thèou.

Furthermore, the man cannot do without woman, neither can the woman do without man in the Lord; for while woman derives from man, and man exists through woman, everything is derived from God.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθιους Α 11.11,12

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 11.11,12 ‘The first thing Paul points out is the interdependence humans experience. Sexual roles could be quite adversarial in pagan Rome, with women being seen as unnecessary by men. But Paul knits them together, teaching that though woman was sourced from man, man is born of woman, and both are from God. What Paul isn’t saying, and it would be unchristian to say it, is that man is the Lord of the woman. It’s interesting that he uses the word head of God to man, in this way. It’s not about authority so much as about creative purpose.’

August 18 2017 Day 230 Readings Esther 1:1-3:15, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 21:19-20

וַיֵּרָא הָמָן--כִּי-אֵין מֶרְדֵּכָי כָּרַע וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא הָמָן חֲמָה וַיִּבֹז בְּעֵינָיו לְשַׁלַּח יָד
בְּמֶרְדֵּכָי לְבַדּוֹ--כִּי-הִגִּידוּ לוֹ אֶת-עַם מֶרְדֵּכָי וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הָמָן לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶת-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים אֲשֶׁר
בְּכָל-מַלְכוּת אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ--עַם מֶרְדֵּכָי

Va-yàr Hamàn ki eyn Mòrdekhai korèa u-mishtachavèh lo, va-yimalèh Hamàn chèmah, va-yabhèz be-eynàv lishlòach yad be-Mòrdekhai lebhaddò, ki higìdu lo et-àm Mòrdekhai, va-yebhaqèsh Hamàn le-hashmìd et-kol-ha-Yehudìm asher be-khòl malkhùt Achashveròsh, am Mòrdekhai.

So when Haman saw that Mordechai did not bow down and prostrate himself before him, Haman was filled with anger; but he loathed the idea of just getting his hands on Mordechai alone, so when he was informed of Mordechai's ethnicity, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews in the whole realm of Ahasuerus, because they were Mordechai's people.

Esther 3.5,6/ אסתר ג"ה

A reflection on Esther 3.5,6 'Because the Jew Mordechai will not entertain rivals to the Lord's supremacy in His life, and therefore will not worship Haman the King's favourite, he and his people are singled out for destruction. Putting the Lord in the place of unrivalled holiness in our lives will not please the world around us, and will even lead to our suffering, but it will result in our rescue by the God who is able to deliver us from evil.'

καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασε καὶ εἶπε· λάβετε φάγετε· τοῦτό μου ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κλώμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

Kai evcharistèesas, èklase kai èepe, 'Làbete, phàyete; toutò moud-esti to sòma to ypèr ymòn klòmenon; tòuto pi-èete ees teen emèen anàmneesin.'

And when He had given thanks He broke it and said, 'Take and eat; this is my body broken for you; do this as a record of me.'

1 Corinthians/Kορινθίους Α 11.25

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 11.25 'There is something in the nature of the bread and wine Jesus shares with His friends at the Passover before His passion which is deeper than a memorial; just as a Jew eating Passover becomes a participant in the very night of deliverance of Israel from Egypt so long before, so Jesus implicates all who partake of the bread and wine of His feast in His redeeming death and resurrection. Just as we re-run a video to witness the events of the past, so the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are a faithful record of His promise and a sign of His presence.'

August 19 2017 Day 231 Readings Esther 4:1-7:10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-26, Psalm 36:1-12, Proverbs 21:21-22

כִּי אִם-הִחַרְשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי בְּעַת הַזֹּאת רִוַח וְהִצַּלָּה יַעֲמוּד לַיהוּדִים מִמָּקוֹם אַחֵר וְאֶת וּבֵית-
אָבִיךָ תֵּאבְדוּ וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם-לַעֲת כִּזְאֵת הִגַּעַת לְמַלְכוּת

Ki im ha-charèsh tachrìshi ba-èt ha-zòt, rèvach ve-hatzèlach ya'amòd la-Yehudìm mi-maqòm achèr, ve-àt u-vèyt avìkh to'vèdu; u-mi yodè'a im le-èt ka-zòt higga'àt la-malkhùt

For if by keeping silent you don't speak up at such a time, then rescue will appear for the Jews from another place, but you and the family of your father will perish; and who knows

but whether for just such a time as this you have attained rulership

Esther 4v14/ אסתר ד"יד

A reflection on Esther 4.14: 'Mordekhai points out that Esther is doomed either way, because she will not escape the slaughter, if it is found out that she is a Jewess. And perhaps, says Mordekhai, she has received her royal position for such a moment as this? Esther bravely agrees to take her life in her hands and to go to the king. She asks for support by fasting from her people, and prepares to go uncalled for to Xerxes.'

ἐκάστω δὲ δίδεται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ Πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

Ekàsto dhe dhìdhotai ee phanèrosis tou Pnèvmatos pros to symphèron.

So the expression of the Spirit is given to each one for mutual benefit.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Α 12.7

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 12.7 'The word Paul uses here of the gifts of the Spirit is the Greek 'phanèrosis', meaning to appear or to materialise. When the Holy Spirit is given space among the people of God, He expresses Himself through them by 'gracings', letting His people see the presence of God through miracles, healing, words of insight, prophecy and unlearned languages. These are not human expressions, but the Spirit's, through human agency. The assembly which gives itself to be available to the Spirit is the venue for heaven being seen on earth.'

כי-עמך מקור חיים באורך נראה-אור

Ki-imkhà meqòr chayyìm; be-orkhà nìr'eh òr

For with You is the source of life; by Your light we can see light

Psalm 36v9/ט"ו תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 36.9 'When the Singer sings of the Lord as the source of life and light, he is not speaking only of Him as the distant, prehistoric origin of our being and our illumination; he is also ascribing to God the ongoing, vital, daily inspiration by which all things continue and cohere, for 'in Him everything holds together' (Colossians 1.17) Three thousand years later, the words of this psalm still resonate as we flourish in the light and life of God.'

August 20 2017 Day 232 Readings Esther 8:1-10:3, 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13, Psalm 37:1-11, Proverbs 21:23-24

כי מרדכי היהודי משנה למלך אחשׁוּרׁוּשׁ וגדול ליהודים ורצוי לרב אחיו דרש טוב לעמו
ודבר שלום לכל-זרעו

Ki Mòrdekhai ha-Yehudì mishnèh la-mèlekh, Achashveròsh, ve-gadòl la-Yehudìm ve-ratzùi le-ròbh achìv, dòresh tobh le-ammò ve-dobhèr shaldòm le-khòl zar'ò

For Mordekhai the Jew was second in rank to the King, Ahasuerus, a hero to the Jews and held in favour among the host of his brothers, as one seeking the good of his people and

imparting wellbeing and peace to all his offspring. Esther 10v3/ אסתר י"ג

A reflection on Esther 10.3: 'Like Joseph and Daniel before him, Mordekhai rises to be prime minister of a foreign nation, ensuring the survival of his people. Once again, a Jew is the vehicle of good government and blessing to an empire not his own land. The promises of Jeremiah 29 are coming to pass.'

βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον· ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους, τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην

Bhlèpomen gar àrti dhi esòptrou en enìgmati, tòte dhe pròsopon pros pròsopon; àrti yinòsko ek mèrous, tòte dhe epignòsomai kathòs kai epegnòstheen.

For now we are just looking into a blurred reflection, but then it will be face to face; for now my knowledge is partial, but then I will fully know, as I am fully known.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Α 13.12

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 13.12 'Far from being a master in his field, Paul admits to having only a blurry insight into the glory ahead with Christ. That reflection now is wonderful, but the man of God looks towards that moment when there is no more 'enigma', as the Greek has it, but we stand 'face to face' with Him, at that moment totally vulnerable, totally known but totally beloved, forgiven and accepted.'

דָּוִם לַיהוָה וְהִתְחַלְלֶל-לוֹ אֶל-תִּתְחַר בְּמַצְלִיחַ דְּרָכּוֹ בְּאִישׁ עֹשֶׂה מְזִמּוֹת

Dom l'Adonài ve-hitcholèl lo; al-titchàr be-matzliach darkò be-ìsh osèh mezimmòt.

Rest in the Lord and hang on for Him; don't get worked up about the seeming success of the ways of people who act underhandedly.

Psalms 37.7/ תהילים ל"ז

A reflection on Psalm 37.7 'With so much injustice and evil in the world, it is possible to become deflected from focus on the Lord and His kingdom, even to being distracted into despair. The Singer of Israel calls on the hearer to quieten their being and, even though sensing pain, to hang on for the Lord's intervention. He does not sleep, allowing us to be refreshed in the midst of the battle.'

August 21 2017 Day 233 Readings Job 1:1-3:26, 1 Corinthians 14:1-17, Psalm 37:12-29, Proverbs 21:25-26

וַיֹּמֶר עָרַם יִצְתִּי מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי וְעָרַם אֲשׁוּב שָׁמָּה יְהוָה נָתַן וַיהוָה לָקַח יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ
Va-yòmer, 'aròm yatzàti mi-bèten immì, ve-aròm ashùbh shàmmah; Adonài natàn, ve-Adonài laqàch. Yehì shem Adonài me-bhoràkh.'

And (Job) said, 'Naked I emerged from the womb of my mother, and naked I shall return there; the LORD has given and the LORD has taken. May the name of the LORD be blessed.'

Job 1.21/ אויב א"כא

A reflection on Job 1.21: 'Everything Job has is stripped away – his family, his livestock, his livelihood. Yet here, his reaction is to fall down prostrate and worship the one who is the source of all, so total is his trust, as God said it would be.'

ἐὰν γὰρ προσεύχωμαι γλώσση, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπος ἐστὶ.

Eàn gar prosèvchomai glòssee, to pnèvma mou prosèvchetai, o dhe nous mou àkarpòs-esti.
For if I pray in an unlearned language, my spirit is praying, but my mind is unproductive.
1 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Α 14.14

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 14.14 ‘Prayer in tongues has become such a contentious issue because it is in the realm of mystery and not under the mastery of the mind, which is anathema to western rational ideology. Paul makes clear here what is happening when he prays in an unlearned language (as he says he often does); his spirit is praying, but his mind is at rest, not active. This does not mean his mind is shut down or disengaged; it is just not running the show. When we pray in unlearned languages, he says, our spirit is praying at the impulse of God’s Holy Spirit, which gives us access to the realm of the Spirit, exceeding the scope of our own thought and imagination. It allows our inner depths to be expressed and enhanced beyond the trammels of our own understanding – mystery indeed!’

August 22 2017 Day 234 Readings Job 4:1-7:21, 1 Corinthians 14:18-40, Psalm 37:30-40, Proverbs 21:27

מָה-אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי תַגְדָּלְנוּ וְכִי-תַשִּׁית אֵלָיו לִבָּךְ

Mah enòsh ki tegadlènnu, ve-khi tashit eylàv libbèkha?

What is man, that you set so much store by him, or that you have set your heart upon him?

Job 7.17/ אויב ז"ר

A reflection on Job 7.17 ‘In the deep lament of his soul over the loss of his family, wealth and health, Job wants to die; he wonders why God bothers with man, why God sets so much store by this weak, fragile being, who seems so at odds with Him. Job’s words are shocking, yet worthy of meditation, being so real, so wounded, yet so God-aware. Even in the midst of the deepest pit, God’s love for us does not let go.’

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί, ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεύειν, καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν γλώσσαις μὴ κωλύετε· πάντα εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω.

Òste, adhelphì, zeelòute to propheetèvin, kai to lalèin glòssais mee kolýete; pànda evscheemònos kai katà tàxin yinèstho

So, brothers, get excited about speaking out God's mind, but don't shut down the speaking in tongues either; let it all happen in a well-managed way, by turns.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Α 14.39,40

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 14.39,40 ‘Paul commends his words to them for evaluation, but urges that they be heeded and not ignored. In case in reading his words the Corinthians apply them harshly, Paul encourages them again to be eager to prophesy, but not to clamp down on tongues because of what he has said. His aim to restore to them decency and order (Greek evscheemónos kai katá táxin.)’

August 23 2017 Day 235 Readings Job 8:1-11:20, 1 Corinthians 15:1-28, Psalm 38:1-22, Proverbs 21:28-29

חַיִּים וְחֶסֶד עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי וּפְקֻדָּתְךָ שְׁמַרְהָ רוּחִי

Chayim va-chèsed asita u-phequdàtkha shomràh ruchì

You have created me for life and covenant-bonded grace, and your engagement preserves my spirit.

Job 10v9/ אויב י"ט

A reflection on Job 10.9: ‘Has God just made Job for the purpose of destroying him? Job recalls the wonder of his creation, the process of conception and gestation which leads to the human child being born. In giving life, God has also shown Job ‘chesed’, His self-sacrificial grace-obligation, and cared for him lovingly. God’s action protects Job’s very existence.’

החֲקֹר אֱלֹהִים תִּמְצֵא אִם עַד-תִּכְלִית שְׂדֵי תִמְצֵא

Ha-heyqèr Elòah timtzà? Im ad-takhlit Shaddài timtzà ?

Can you ever find God by reason? Can you ever fathom the Almighty completely?

Job 11v7/ אוֹיֵב יֵא"ר

A reflection on Job 11.7: ‘Zophar questions Job’s perspective, since the Lord’s nature is beyond measuring or human comprehension. As Paul later writes to the Romans, ‘How unsearchable His judgements and His ways beyond tracing out’. We can never by our reason fathom totally the abyss of His fulness.’

παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη, καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς

Parèdhoka gar ymin en pròtis, o kai parèlabhon, òti Christòs apèthanen ypèr ton amartiòn eemòn katà tas graphàs, kai òti etàphee, kai òti eyèeyertai tee trìtee eemèra katà tas graphàs. For I passed on to you as of prime importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians/Kορινθίους Α 15.3,4

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 15 .3,4 ‘Paul states for the record what he sees as the core of the good news of Jesus Christ. That is, the death of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, his burial and his resurrection from the dead, being witnessed by hundreds of people, including Paul himself. Paul counts himself among those who have seen the risen Christ. Not just a vision, or a hallucination, but the Lord Himself. Paul witnesses to how crazy this is, seeing how he set out to destroy the church of Jesus by persecution. Yet, he says, by God’s grace I am what I am – an apostle, one sent by Jesus to bear witness to His saving death and resurrection .’

εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ δὲ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν.

Ee Christòs ouk eyèeyertai, kenòn àra to kèerygma eemòn, kenèe dhe ee pìstis ym òn.

So if Messiah has not been raised from the dead, our announcement of it is futile and then also your faith is futile.

1 Corinthians 15.14/Κορινθίους Α 15.14

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 15.14 ‘Paul is unequivocal about the fact of the physical resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. If His breaking out of the tomb is a myth, then everything Paul promises in his retelling of the story of the rescue by God of His people is futile, and people are believing a fairy-tale. But, he says, Christ has truly risen from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. Faith in Jesus is not a philosophical proposition, but an outrageous assertion that God has overturned the last enemy!’

אֶל-תַּעֲזְבֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֵל-תִּרְחֹק מִמֶּנִּי חוֹשָׁה לְעִזְרָתִי אֲדֹנָי תְּשׁוּעָתִי

Al-ta’azbhèyni, Adonài; Elohài, al-tirchàq mimmènni. Chushàh le-ezratì, Adonài teshu’ati.

Don't leave me, Lord; my God, don't back off from me. Hurry up and help me, O Lord, my Rescuer.

Psalm 38.21,22/כב"כא לח"ה תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 38.21,22 'The Singer is in great distress here, suffering physically and feeling abandoned by his friends. Even in this low state, he is expecting the Lord to come through for him, and this last appeal is for God to stay close, not to back off, but to be His Rescuer. He is not giving up on God, and he asks God not to give up on him.'

August 24 2017 Day 236 Readings Job 12:1-15:35, 1 Corinthians 15:29-58, Psalm 39:1-13, Proverbs 21:30-31

בישישים חכמה וארך ימים תבונה

Bi-shishim chokhmah ve-orekh yamim tebhunah.

Wisdom comes with age, and discernment with the extension of time.

Job 12.12/ב"יב אויב

A reflection on Job 12.12 'What a wonderful thing it would be if we were born with the gift of hindsight! Job here reflects, however, that time is a great teacher, and experience a great treasury of wisdom. If we want insight, and to see the bigger picture, listening to those long in days is a tree which yields fruit.'

ὅταν δὲ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀφθαρσίαν καὶ τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο ἐνδύσῃται ἀθανασίαν, τότε γενήσεται ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος· κατεπόθη ὁ θάνατος εἰς νίκος.

Òtan dhe to phthartòn tòuto endhýseetai aphtharsian kai to thneetòn tòuto endhýseetai athanasian, tòte yeneesetai o lògos o yegrammènos, 'katethòpee o thànatos ees nikos.'

So when this perishable body has put on the imperishable one, and this mortality clothes itself in deathlessness, then the word will come about which is written, 'Death is engulfed in triumph!'

1 Corinthians 15.54/Κορινθιους Α 15.54

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 15.54 'As a Pharisee, Paul would have been very familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures which speak of resurrection and God's final judgement on death itself, breaking its hold on humanity and all of creation. He refers here to Isaiah 25.8 and 26.19, where God will destroy death, going on to cite Hosea 13.14. For him, Jesus was the forerunner of that promise in which all those who put their trust in Him alone will one day share, when we receive those new, undying bodies, like His is now.'

August 25 2017 Day 237 Readings Job 16:1-19:29, 1 Corinthians 16:1-24, Psalm 40:1-10, Proverbs 22:1

גם-עתה הנה-בשמים עדי ושהדי במקומים

Gam attah, hinèh ba-shamayim eydi, ve-sahadi bam-romim.

But even now, look, I have one who testifies for me in heaven, and my witness is in the highest place.

Job 16v19/אויב טז"יט

A reflection on Job 16.19: ‘Job again makes reference to one who can mediate for him with the Lord; somewhere in the unseen realm, Job looks for a witness (Heb. saḥèd, from a root meaning to record or to witness), one who can stand before God and argue his case from the perspective of the divine. Here would be one who could intercede with God on man’s behalf. Could such a one exist?’

וְאֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי גֹאֲלֵי חַי וְאַחַרֹּן עַל-עֶפְרַיִם יָקוּם

Ve-anì yadà-ti goalì chai, ve-acharòn al-èpher yaqùm

For I know my redeemer lives, and at the end He will rise over the earth

Job 19v25/ אויב יט"כה

A reflection on Job 19.25: ‘Despite all his rock-bottom anguish, Job is holding on to what he believes, that his vindication will come. He is anchored in a relationship with God which cannot be shaken, which is rock-solid, and thus he wants to go on record in His beautiful, simple Hebrew to say ‘I know that my redeemer lives’ (Heb וְאֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי גֹאֲלֵי חַי /Va-anì yadà’ti, go’alì chai) – Job knows that the nature and character of God is in His deepest essence good, and His purpose is to transform even the darkest moments. Thus, even though Job is racked with pain and suffering, he believes that he will still see God, even in the midst of death.’

᾿Ασπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς ᾿Ασίας. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς ἐν Κυρίῳ πολλὰ ᾿Ακύλας καὶ Πρίσκιλλα σὺν τῇ κατ’ οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

Aspàzondai ymàs ai ekkleesìai tees Asìas; aspàzondai ymàs en Kyriò pollà Akýlas kai Priskilla syn tee kat’èekon avtòn ekkleesia.

The assemblies of Asia send their greetings; Aquila and Priscilla are sending you lots of greetings along with the gathering in their house.

1 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Α 16.19

A reflection on 1 Corinthians 16.19 ‘As Paul draws his first letter to Jesus’ people in Corinth, southern Greece, to a close, we pick up some personal notes about the situation he is in. He is writing from Ephesus, on the western seaboard of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), and so includes the best wishes of the believers in that part of the empire. In particular, he sends greetings from Aquila and Priscilla, the Jewish couple expelled from Rome who settled in Corinth and worked alongside Paul in tent-making, also later assisting Apollos’ formation in the Spirit, (Acts 18). They are now apparently in Asia Minor, and have a group of believers meeting in their home; this reminds us that there are no Christian-owned public buildings at this time, the followers of Jesus meeting to eat, learn and worship together in houses whose doors are open to them.’

August 26 2017 Day 238 Readings Job 20:1-22:30, 2 Corinthians 1:1-11, Psalm 40:11-17, Proverbs 22:2-4

קח-נָא מִפִּי תוֹרָה וְשִׁים אֶמְרָיו בְּלִבְבְּךָ

Qàch-na mippìv toràh, ve-sèem amaràv bi-lebhabhèkha.

From His mouth, take on board formation (torah) , and set His words in your heart.

Job 22.22/ אויב כב"כ

A reflection on Job 22.22 ‘In this verse in Job is the only occurrence in the whole book of the word ‘Torah’. Given the importance attached by Jews to this Narrative and Formation of God’s people, it is worth noting that Job does not have more to say on it; but here, Eliphaz urges Job to receive God’s ‘torah’ – ‘law’ is a very inadequate translation of this word – as the formative guide for his life, establishing it in the core of his being, his heart.’

ὅτι καθὼς περισσεύει τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς, οὕτω διὰ Χριστοῦ περισσεύει καὶ ἡ παράκλησις ἡμῶν.

Ὅτι kathòs perissèvi ta pathèmata tou Christòu ees ymàs, òuto dhià Christòu perissèvi kai ee paràkleisis eemòn.

So just as the sufferings of Christ are overflowing onto us, so also through Christ our comfort is overflowing.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 1.5

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 1.5 ‘As an ambassador of Jesus Christ, Paul shares in the rejection and violence endured by Jesus, as those hearing the good news of Messiah react not only gladly but also badly, and cause harm. In this sense, the suffering of Jesus is overflowing onto His servants, as He said it would. But also, because of the power of God’s Spirit to hold back evil, there is a contrary flow rising, the comfort and hope of God, the one who is called the Comforter, to counter that trial with joy.’

August 27 2017 Day 239 Readings Job 23:1-27:23, 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11, Psalm 41:1-13, Proverbs 22:5-6

כִּי יָדַע דְּרֶךְ עַמִּדִי בְּחַנֵּי כֶזֶהב אֶצְאָ

Ki yadà dèrech immadi; be-chanàni ka-zahàv etzè

For He knows the way it is with me; He is assaying me, seeing what I am made of, and I will turn out like gold.

Job 23v10/ אוֹיֵב כַּגִּי

A reflection on Job 23.10: ‘Job senses there is something of proving going on for him here, a testing which is like a crucible of fire. If he can hold on, if he can stay faithful and not curse God, he will at last understand what this is all about.’

ὅσαι γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαι Θεοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναί καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ἀμήν, τῷ Θεῷ πρὸς δόξαν δι’ ἡμῶν.

Ὅσαι gar epangeliai Theòu, en avtò to nai kai en avtò to amèn, to Theò pros dhòxan dhi’eemòn.

For however many promises God has made, Jesus is the ‘yes’ to them all and the ‘so be it’ said on our behalf, bringing glory to God.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 1.20

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 1.20 ‘Paul wants his readers in Corinth to know that he does not blow hot and cold with regards to his being sold out for Jesus and the good news of His life unlimited, because Jesus whom he proclaims is Himself utterly dependable, the seal on God’s promises and the authentication of God’s plans for the rescue of His people.’

August 28 2017 Day 240 Readings Job 28:1-30:31, 2 Corinthians 2:12-17, Psalm 42:1-11, Proverbs 22:7

וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָדָם הֵן יִרְאֵת אֲדֹנָי הִיא חֻכְמָה וְסוּר מִרַע בִּינָה

Va-yomèr le-adàm hen yiràt Adonài hi chokhmàh ve-sùr me-rà binàh
And He told humanity that to be in serious awe of the LORD is true wisdom and to steer
away from evil choices is real discernment.
Job 28.28/ אויב כח"כ

A reflection on Job 28.28: ‘God alone is the source of wisdom, because He has a perfect
experience of all things. Job is certain that his situation has a reason behind it, and he is
willing to trust God’s integrity even in the midst of his suffering. The key to wisdom and
discernment is therefore an awe of God which entrusts itself to His reliability and
refuses to act in ways which abuses His person and covenant.’

ὅτι Χριστοῦ εὐωδία ἐσμὲν τῷ Θεῷ ἐν τοῖς σωζομένοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς
ἀπολλυμένοις·

Ὅτι Christòu evodhìa esmèn to Theò en tis sozomènis kai en tis apollymènis.
For we are Christ’s fragrance for God among the rescued as well as those who are lost.
2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 2.15

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 2.15 ‘The life of Jesus expressed in His people changes the
atmosphere from acrid smoke to clear air, wherever they go. Like a spring fragrance, the lives
Jesus has transformed are designed to bring refreshment to God, to others in His body and to
those who are still to know His rescuing power.’

כְּאֵיל תַעְרַג עַל-אֶפְיָקִי-מַיִם כֵּן נִפְשִׁי תַעְרַג אֵלַיךְ אֱלֹהִים
Ke-ayàl ta’aròg al-aphiqèy mayìm, ken naphshì ta’aròg elèkha, Elohim
Like a hind braying for burns of water, so my being groans for You, O God
Psalm 42v1/א"א תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 42.1 ‘The picture the Singer gives here of the deer thirsting for water is
not of a European hart in a woodland scene, but of a Middle Eastern animal in searing heat,
looking for scarce resources. The word chosen for the sound of the deer is ‘braying’, a
groaning from its depths after a resource without which it will die. This is how the Singer
experiences his longing for the presence of God – a deep yearning for that upon which life
itself depends.’

**August 29 2017 Day 241 Readings Job 31:1-33:33, 2 Corinthians 3:1-18, Psalm 43:1-5,
Proverbs 22:8-9**

אֲמַרְתִּי יָמִים יִדְבְּרוּ וְרַב שָׁנִים יִדְעוּ חֻכְמָה אֲכַן רוּחַ-הַיָּהוָה בְּאָנֹשׁ וְנִשְׁמַת שְׂדֵי תְּבִינָם
Amàrti. ‘Yamim yedabbèru, ve-ròbh shanìm yodi’ù chokmàh,’ akhèn rùach hi be-enòsh, ve-
nishmàt Shaddài tebhìnèm.

I said to myself, ‘Length of days should speak up and wealth of years should be experienced
in wisdom’, yet in fact it is the Spirit who works in man, and the inspiration of the Most High
that brings insight.’

Job 32.7,8/ אויב לב"ז ח

A reflection on Job 32.7,8 'The young man Elihu has been listening respectfully to the conversation of the deaf going on between Job and his friends; he has been waiting for some wise insight from those whose years should have brought them more experience of God's goodness and reliability. At last, he intervenes and upbraids his elders for their spiritual ineptitude, observing that it is not the passage of time that brings insight, but the Spirit of the Most High; without the revelation and inspiration of God's own person, the old men are living lost in the mist of their own intellect.'

ὁ δὲ Κύριος τὸ Πνεῦμά ἐστιν· οὗ δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα Κυρίου, ἐκεῖ ἐλευθερία.

O dhe Kýrios to Pnèvmà-estin; ou dhe to Pnèvma Kyriou, ekèe elevtherìa

So the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Corinthians/Kορινθίους Β 3.17

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 3.17 'So now, there is no need to hide the glory which the Holy Spirit is imparting through the good news of Jesus, rather, it can be seen and seen to be increasing among them, because of the liberating work of the Holy Spirit. He is changing believers from one degree of glory, from one level of the full import of God's life to another, forming Christ ever more deeply in their lives. This is the joy of the work of the Lord, who is the Spirit.'

August 30 2017 Day 242 Readings Job 34:1-36:33, 2 Corinthians 4:1-12, Psalm 44:1-8, Proverbs 22:10-12

הֲ-אֵל שְׂגִי אֵל וְלֹא נִדְעַ מִסְפָּר שָׁנָיו וְלֹא-חֶקֶר

Heyn, El saggì ve-lò nèyda, mispàr shanàv ve-lò hèyqer.

Look, God is so amazing, we cannot get our minds round Him, nor can we count the sum of His years.

Job 36.26/ אויב לו"כו

A reflection on Job 36.26 'The young man Elihu continues his discourse on the goodness and faithfulness of God and the fragility of man; when man pontificates about God and His nature, he puts himself at a strong disadvantage. However clever our insight appears, God is beyond full comprehension, not discovered by our investigation but known only by His self-revelation.'

ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψαι, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Òti o Theòs o eepòn ek skòtous phos làmpsai, os èlampsen en tais kardhìas eemòn pros photismòn tees gnòseos tees dhòxees tou Theòu en prosòpo Yeesòu Christòu.

For God, who said 'Let light shine out of the darkness' has shone in our hearts, to light up the experience of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians/Kορινθίους Β 4.6

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 4.6 'Paul is likening the human heart's experience of God's whole gravity seen in the face of Jesus Christ with the very creation of light itself at the beginning. In the Hebrew mindset, the word for face is also the word for presence; when we encounter the presence of Christ by His Spirit, we are also touching His face, even though we do not see it, leading us to what Peter later describes in 1 Peter 1.8 as 'joy beyond words, full of glory.'

August 31 2017 Day 243 Readings Job 37:1-39:30, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10, Psalm 44:9-26, Proverbs 22:13

שְׁדַי לֹא-מִצְאָנָהוּ שְׂגִיָּא-כַח וּמִשְׁפָּט וְרַב-צְדָקָה לֹא יַעֲנֶה

Shaddài lo-metzanùhu, sagì-khòach u-mishpàt, ve-ròv tzedaqàh, lo-ya'anèh

The Almighty is inscrutable to us, exceedingly powerful and just, and great in integrity, not oppression.

Job 37v23/ אויב לז"כ

A reflection on Job 37.23: 'Elihu concludes with an invitation to Job to be in awe before the God who brings both clouds and clear skies, who puts the sun in the heavens which man cannot even countenance in its glory. God is beyond our judgement, and inscrutably powerful, but in the depth of His being, God is just and not vindictive.'

τὸ γὰρ παραυτίκα ελαφρόν τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν

To gar paravtika elaphròn tees thlipseos eemòn kath'yperbholèen ees yperbholèen aiònion bhàros dhòxees katergàzetai.

For our momentary, passing trouble is accomplishing in us an exceptionally greater weight of glory without limit.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 4.17

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 4.17 'We so often lose perspective when we run into challenges and difficulties in our journey with Jesus; we easily choose to believe either that He has failed us or that we have failed Him. Yet Paul makes clear that the 'passing trouble' we go through in life is not pointless, nor wasted, but is actually formative, shaping us into vessels of unlimited glory for the age to come. From this transcendent vantage-point we can go forward in undimmed hope.'

September 1 2017 Day 243 Readings Job 40:1-42:17, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, Psalm 45:1-17, Proverbs 22:14

לְשִׁמְעָ-אֶזְרָא שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ וְעַתָּה עֵינַי רָאִתְךָ

Le-shemà-ozèn shematikha, ve-atàh eynì ra'atkha

With my ears I heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You

Job 42v5/ אויב מב"ה

A reflection on Job 42.5: 'Job is left humbled at last before the Almighty. He has been overreaching in his arguments, and finds himself way out on a limb. Job has come face to face with God's wonderful person, and having seen Him, realises his own frailty, and repents. This turning in his heart leaves God in a place to restore and redeem.'

ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρήλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονε καινὰ τὰ πάντα·

Òste ee tis en Christò, kainèe ktìsis; ta archàia parèlthen, idhòu yègone kainà ta pànda.

So then, if anyone is included into Christ, they are a new creature; the old has gone – look, everything has become new!

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 5.17

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 5.17 ‘Paul is given direct insight into the nature of the one infused with the Spirit of God through Jesus – they are now part of the new creation, a new creature. What has gone, everything is now on a different basis since the resurrection of Christ, who gives us the promise of life unlimited with Him.’

September 2 2017 Day 245 Readings Ecclesiastes 1:1-3:22, 2 Corinthians 6:1-13, Psalm 46:1-11, Proverbs 22:15

וּפְנִיתִי אֲנִי בְכֹל-מַעֲשֵׂי שְׁעֵשׂוּ יָדַי וּבְעַמְלַ שְׁעַמְלֹתַי לְעֵשׂוֹת וְהִנֵּה הַכֹּל הֶבֶל וְרַעוֹת רוּחַ וְאֵין יִתְרוֹן תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ

U-phaniti anì be-khòl ma-asèy she-asù yadài u-bhe-amàl she-amàlti la-asòt, ve-hinèh, ha-kòl hèbhèl u-re’ùt rùach ve-èyn yitròn tàchat ha-shàmesh.

And, turning to all the busyness my hands had got into and how stressed I was doing it, just look – it’s all so ephemeral! It’s just chasing the wind, with no lasting gain under the sun’s daily round.

Ecclesiastes 2.11/א"י/קוהלת

A reflection on Ecclesiastes 2.11 ‘Solomon, the man granted wisdom from God, is appalled at the futility of godless human industry. Without the perspective of our divine eternal meaning, which he says is written into our hearts, (though many ignore it) all our struggle is futile and just ‘chasing the wind.’ In an age where man is full of his own self-importance, Ecclesiastes is a book of insight into what is really going on and into what really matters. What we do is only passing; who we are in relation to God is everlasting.’

אַלְל' ἐν παντὶ συνιστῶντες ἑαυτοὺς ὡς Θεοῦ διάκονοι, ἐν ὑπομονῇ πολλῇ, ἐν θλίψεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις

All'èn pandì synistòndes eavtòus os Thèou dhiàkoni, en ypomonèe pollèe, en thlìpsesin, en anàngkais, en stenochorìais

Bu in everything, we ourselves model what it is to be servants of God, through patience, under pressure, through making the best of it, through constraints

2 Corinthians/Korinthious B 6.4

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 6.4 ‘This verse launches a long list of situations in life in which the follower of Jesus has the opportunity to model what difference living in the power of the Spirit of God makes to us; in every circumstance, Jesus invites us to live in joyful dependence on His provision, even on the most difficult days, as those who reign in life.’

2 Cor 6.13 Gk 16'47 Heb 1'15'55

September 3 2017 Day 246 Readings Ecclesiastes 4:1-6:12, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:7, Psalm 47:1-9, Proverbs 22:16

וְאִם-יִתְקַפּוּ הָאֲחֻד-הַשָּׁנִים יַעֲמְדוּ נִגְדוֹ וְהַחוּט הַמְשֻׁלָּשׁ לֹא בְמַהְרָה יִנְתַּק
Ve-ìm yitqephò ha-echàd, ha-shnàyim ya'amdù negdò, ve-ha-chùt ha-meshulàsh lo bhimheràh yinatèyq.

But if someone tries to overpower the one, two can withstand him, for a three-stranded cord is not quickly severed.

קוהלת ד"ב/ב Ecclesiastes 4.12

A reflection on Ecclesiastes 4.12 'Man was made for relationship, including relationship with His maker and Father, God. When we try to go it alone, we struggle to stand; but when we are folded into another, when we give ourselves away instead of trying to be big in the face of adversity on our own, a synergy happens which makes the sum of the whole greater than its individual parts. According to the Teacher, two are definitely better than one.'

καὶ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς πατέρα, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας, λέγει Κύριος παντοκράτωρ.

Kai èsōmai ymìn ees patèra, kai ymèes èsesthè-mi ees yiòus kai thygatèras, lèyi Kýrios pandokràtor.

And I will be a father to you, and you will be to me sons and daughters, says the Lord All-powerful.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 6.18

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 6.18 'Paul has just been explaining to the Corinthians why they cannot mix worship of the pagan non-gods with worship of the God of Abraham. The clincher is that they are not slaves, but children, beloved sons and daughters of the Lord all-powerful. Why would they then look for consolation to any other source, when their very life comes from the One in whom all things cohere?'

September 4 2017 Day 247 Readings Ecclesiastes 7:1-9:18, 2 Corinthians 7:8-16, Psalm 48:1-14, Proverbs 22:17-19

טוב ללכת אל-בית-אבל מלכת אל-בית משתה באשר הוא סוף כל-האדם והחי יתן אל- לבו

Tobh la-lèkhet el-bèyt èybhel mi-lèkhet el-bèyt mishtëh, ba-ashèr hu soph kol-ha-adàm, ve-ha-chài yittèn el-libbò

Better to go to a house of mourning than to a house of feasting, for there is the outcome of every man, and the living will take it to heart.

קוהלת א ז"ב/ב Ecclesiastes 7v2

A reflection on Ecclesiastes 7.2 'There is something about funerals, says the Preacher, which teaches us more than parties. They teach us to value each day of our life and be thankful for it, and that we are not boundless; all of us die. Mourning may be more formative of long-term character and dependence on God than pleasure, even though it is unpleasant. I heard a great preacher say not so long ago, 'I'm not afraid of dying, I'm afraid of not living first. ' '

דברי חכמים בנחת נשמעים מזעקת מושל בכסילים

Dibhrèy chakhamìm benàchat nishma'im mi-za'qàt moshèl ba-kesilìm

The words of the wise are more favourable to hear than the shouts of a leader of fools

קוהלת א ט"ז/ז Ecclesiastes 9v17

A reflection on Ecclesiastes 9.17 'Often, wisdom speaks quietly without pushing itself forward. Folly, on the other hand, tends to make a big noise. In a day of brash promotionalism and transient celebrity, we need to be sure to drink at the wells of wisdom, whose source is the awe of God. '

ἢ γὰρ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον κατεργάζεται· ἢ δὲ τοῦ κόσμου λύπη θάνατον κατεργάζεται.

Ee gar katà Theòn lýpee metànian ees soteerian ametamèleeton katergàzetai; ee dhe tou kòsmou lýpee thànaton katèrgàzetai.

For sorrow expressed towards God produces a transformation of mind that brings rescue, with no looking back; but the world's kind of sorrow just end up in death.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 7.10

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 7.10 'Paul is expressing his sadness at having caused the church in Corinth pain, by writing to them so strongly about the immorality among them, back in 1 Corinthians 5; but he does not regret causing them sorrow, since sorrow that turns to God for healing and restoration is transformative, while the world apart from God experiences sorrow as a life-sapping, destructive force.'

גדול יהוה ומהלל מאד בעיר אלהינו הר-קדש

Gaddol Adonài, u-mehullàl me'òd, be-èer Elohèynu, har-qodshò

Great is the LORD and to be praised much in our God's city, on His holy hill

Psalm 48v1/א"ח תהלים

A reflection on Psalm 48.1 'Coming together to worship the Lord is a delight commended by the Singer here. His achievements are worth committing time to celebrate, so great are they, and this is best done in a place of gathering, in His place set apart for that purpose. The gathering of God's people should always be vibrant with praise, and focussed on His person.'

September 5 2017 Day 248 Readings Ecclesiastes 10:1-12:14, 2 Corinthians 8;1-15, Psalm 49:1-20, Proverbs 22:20-21

הבל הבלים אמר הקוהלת הכל הבל

Habhèl habhalim, amàr ha-qohèlet, ha-kòl hàbhel

So transient and ephemeral, says the Preacher, everything is so transient

Ecclesiastes 12v8/ח"ב קוהלת יב"ח

A reflection on Ecclesiastes 12.8 'The word in the Hebrew original of this verse for 'transient' is 'habhel', a puff of breath. It's the same root from which the name Abel comes, the first man to die in the Bible, and reminds us that life is a visit, not a stay. The good news is that Jesus Christ has come to give us life that goes beyond this transient breath— it's why His shed blood 'speaks a better outcome than that of Abel's' (Heb.12.24)'

עשות ספרים הרבה אין קץ ולהג הרבה יגעת בשר

Asòt sepharim harbèh eyn qeyts, ve-lahàg harbèh yegì'at basàr

Of the making of books galore, there's no end, but studying much wears the body

Ecclesiastes 12v12/ב"י קוהלת א יב"י

A reflection on Ecclesiastes 12.12 'In an age where we are bombarded with information at every moment, it is worth hearing the words of the ancient sage speaking in a day before printing and before mass literacy. He reminds us that there will always be more available than we can assimilate, and that our intake needs to be at a humane level. We cannot know everything, and we need to be at rest within our limitations.'

καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ τὸ πολὺ οὐκ ἐπλεόνασε, καὶ ὁ τὸ ὀλίγον οὐκ ἤλαττόνησε.

Kathòs yègraptai, ‘O to polý ouk epleònase, kai o to oligon ouk eelattòneese’.
As it is written, ‘The one with a lot had no excess, and the one with a little had no lack.’
2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 8.15

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 8.15 ‘As Paul encourages the Corinthians to be as generous in their material giving as are the Macedonians, he reminds them of the need to share what God has given, so that there is no lack in the body, particularly among the famine-struck believers in Judaea. He quotes Exodus 16.18 and the miracle of the manna, the food in the desert that sustained Israel; whether someone gathered much or little, they had neither excess nor lack, for God ensured all were fully provided for in His grace.’

אך-אלהים יפְדֶה נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד-שְׂאוּל כִּי יִקְחֵנִי סֵלָה

Akh Elohim yiphdèh naphshì mi-yàd She'òl, ki yiqqachèni. (Selàh)

But God will set my being free from the control of the underworld, for He will receive me. (Pause for thought during the instrumental)

תהילים מט"ט/15v49 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 49.15 ‘There are moments in life where we feel like life is in the charge of evil powers. But the Singer here is convinced that the Lord has the power to free from the tyranny of the shadows, and that He will bring him into safety. He takes a moment as the music plays, a ‘selah’ moment, to dwell in the comfort of that promise.’

September 6 2017 Day 249 Readings Song of Solomon 1:1-4:16, 2 Corinthians 8:16-24, Psalm 50:1-23, Proverbs 22:22-23

[דודי לי ואני לו הרעה בשושנים](#)

[Dodì li, va'anì lo, ha-ro'èh ba-shoshannim](#)

[My lover's mine, and I'm His, who shepherds among the lilies](#)

[שיר השרים ב"ט/16v2 Song of Songs](#)

[A reflection on Song of Songs 2.16 ‘ Anyone who doubts God’s plan for great sexual connection between man and woman needs to read Song of Songs. This erotic love-poem, a metaphor for the relationship between God and man, is a beautiful, sensuous, profound exploration of human physical love. It ends by stressing the irrevocable bond of covenant which faithful, matrimonial love brings \(8.6-7\); such a powerful force in human beings takes a lifetime for a husband and wife to fully express.’](#)

אם-אָרַעַב לֹא-אֶמַר לָךְ כִּי-לִי תִבֵּל וּמְלֵאָה

Im er'abh, lo omàr lakh, ki li tèybhel u-melòah.

If I were hungry, I wouldn't tell you, for the world and everything in it is mine!

תהילים נ"ב/12v50 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 50.12 ‘In case we believe that our activity is somehow indispensable to God and that by it we earn brownie points, the Singer reminds God's people that even if He were in need of something, He wouldn't tell us about it, for everything that exists is already His for the taking! What he wants, the Song goes on, is our love and thankfulness for all He showers on us.’

September 7 2017 Day 250 Readings Song of Solomon 5:1-8:14, 2 Corinthians 9:1-15, Psalm 51:1-19, Proverbs 22:24-25

χάρις τῷ Θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ.

Chàris to Theò epì tee anekdhiyèeto avtòu dhoreà.

Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift.

2 Corinthians/Kορινθίους Β 9.15

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 9.15 ‘At the end of his encouragement to the Corinthians to act on their promises to contribute to the material needs of the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, Paul calls them to recognise the incalculable value of the gift God has given of Himself in Jesus the Messiah; however much we offer to Him of what we have, we can never outgive the Lord!’

לב טהור בְּרָא-לִי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי
אל-תשליכני מלפניך וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אל-תקח ממני

Lebh-tahòr berà-li, Elohim, ve-rùach nakhòn chaddèsh be-qirbi

Al-tashlikhèyni mil-phanèykha, ve-rùach qodshekhà al-tiqqàch mimèni

Create me a pure heart, God, and make my spirit right and like new inside me; don't send me away from Your presence-face, and don't take Your Holy Spirit from me

Psalm 51v12&13/ שמואל ב ז"ה

A reflection on Psalm 51.12-13 ‘David knows that He cannot do without being close up to and in touch with the presence-face of God, nor without His precious, ever-present Spirit. His own sin of adultery and conspiracy to murder has been uncovered, but in Psalm 51 he appeals to God’s ‘hesed’, His covenant grace-obligation, asking Him to blot out that sin as David bows his heart in true repentance. There is something very New Covenant about David’s approach, asking for pardon in this way. In Jesus Christ, every sin, however disgusting, however heinous, has been buried under His blood, restoring our failed humanity to the Father’s embrace as we turn to Him in a change of direction and heart.’

September 8 2017 Day 251 Readings Isaiah 1:1-2:22, 2 Corinthians 10:1-18, Psalm 52:1-9, Proverbs 22:26-27

צִיּוֹן בַּמִּשְׁפָּט תִּפְדֶּה וְשָׁבִיָּה בַצְדָקָה

Tzi-yòn be-mishpàt tipadèh, ve-shavèhah bi-tzedaqàh

Zion will be redeemed with equity, and her returnees with integrity.

ישעיהו א"ד/ Isaiah 1v14

A reflection on Isaiah 1.14 ‘Isaiah foresees the time of Judah’s reckoning, her coming exile on the horizon, the upshot of her adultery with the non-gods of the nations. But he also sees her restoration, her being put back to rights, which is the concept behind the Hebrew word ‘mishpat’ – justice, restoring what has become chaotic to order; and a number of those displaced will come back to Zion, the place of God’s presence and reign, to live in integrity and uprightness before the Lord who has rescued her. This is always our Father’s heart – to redeem and to restore, to set to rights what has been corrupted and broken.’

‘Ο δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν Κυρίῳ καυχάσθω·

O dhe kavchòmenos en Kyriò kavchàstho.

So if anyone has something to crow about, let it be about the Lord!

2 Corinthians/Kορινθίους Β 10.17

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 10.17 ‘Humans love to big themselves them up. Paul is letting us know, however, that there is only One worth really getting excited about, and that is Jesus!’

September 9 2017 Day 252 Readings Isaiah 3:1-5:30, 2 Corinthians 11:1-15, Psalm 53:1-6, Proverbs 22:28-29

וַבְּרֵא יְהוָה עַל כָּל-מְכוֹן הַר-צִיּוֹן וְעַל-מִקְרָאָהָ עֵן יוֹמָם וְעֶשֶׂן וְנִגְהָ אֵשׁ לְהַבָּה לַיְלָה כִּי
עַל-כָּל-כְּבוֹד הַפָּה

U-bharàh Adonài al kol mekhòn har-Tziyòn ve-àl miqra-èyha anàn yomàm, ve-ashàn ve-nògah esh le-habhàh làyla, ki al kol kabhòd chùppah.

And the Lord will create over every dwelling in Mount Zion and over her gatherings a cloud-cover by day and the smoking brilliance of a flaming fire by night, so that over all, the heavy glory will be a canopy.

[Isaiah 4.5/ה"ה](#) [ישעיהו ד"ה](#)

A reflection on Isaiah 4.5 ‘Having spelled out the terrible consequences of Israel’s forsaking the covenant, the Lord through Isaiah, His servant, promises a restoration of the intimacy between God and His people in their desert wanderings; daytime cloud-cover to shield from the sun, brilliant fire to light the night-time, a canopy of heavy glory over them. The word Isaiah uses here for ‘canopy’ is for Jews the immediately recognisable word ‘chùppah’, the covering under which a bride and groom make their vows to each other, to this day. The Lord is saying, Israel will again be His beloved bride, and He their husband.’

ζηλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς Θεοῦ ζήλω· ἡρμοσάμην γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ, παρθένον ἀγνήν παραστῆσαι τῷ Χριστῷ· φοβοῦμαι δὲ μήπως, ὡς ὁ ὄφις Εὐάν ἐξηπάτησεν ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτοῦ, οὕτω φθαρῇ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀπλότητος τῆς εἰς τὸν Χριστόν.

Zeelò gar ymàs Theòu zèelo; eermosàmeen gar ymàs enì andrì, parthènon agnèen parastèesai to Christò, phobhòumai dhe mèepos os o òphis Èvan exeepàteesen en tee panouryia avtòu, òuto phtharèe ta noèemata ymòn apò tees aplòteetos tees ees ton Christòn.

For I am jealous for you with God's jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, as a virgin untouched, to give you away to Christ, but I fear lest, as the snake seduced Eve by his treachery, your thinking might be subverted away from the simplicity which is in Christ.

2 Corinthians/Kορινθίους Β 11.2,3

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 11.2,3 ‘Paul continues this theme, reminding them of his foundational teaching, and his promising them for Christ alone. He fears that the present teachers who are seeking to mislead them are teaching them a different Jesus than the one originally presented to them and that they are pulling the readers away from the simplicity of Christ. If our relationship with Jesus is based on complicated theological systems, we have probably missed the simple heart of relationship with Him.’

September 10 2017 Day 253 Readings Isaiah 6:1-7:25, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, Psalm 54:1-7, Proverbs 23:1-3

וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל-זֶה וַאֲמַר קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ
Ve-qaràh zeh el-zèh ve-amàr, ‘Qadòsh, Qadòsh, Qadòsh, Adonài Tseva’òt, melò khol-ha-àrets kebhodò’

And each one called to the other and said;

‘Holy, holy, holy, the Lord of armies; all the earth is full of His glory’

ישעיהו ו"ג/ג' Isaiah 6v3/g'

A reflection on Isaiah 6.3 ‘The angelic beings Isaiah sees in the Temple, overawed by the complete transcendence of the Lord, sing of the whole earth being filled with His glory – His full weight, His gravity. Nothing that exists can exist without His sustaining word; He is over and above His creation, yet described by it. What an awesome world, what a tremendous God!’

χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτὸς ἢ ἐπισύστασις μου ἢ καθ’ ἡμέραν, ἢ μέριμνα πασῶν τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.

Chorìs ton parektòs ee episýstatis-mou ee kath’ eemèran, ee mèrimna pasòn ton ekkleesiòn. And besides those external matters I am dealing with every day, I carry concern for all the assemblies.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 11.28

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 11.28 ‘Whatever else takes up Paul’s attention, he cannot take his heart off the wellbeing of all of the assemblies of Jesus’ people that he is related to; he carries them in his heart, in his prayer. They are not out of sight, out of mind; God has placed them deep in his being, even when he is away from them. Such is the burden of the apostle.’

September 11 2017 Day 254 Readings Isaiah 8:1-9:21, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Psalm 55:1-23, Proverbs 23:4-5

כִּי-יֵלֵד יֵלֵד-לָנוּ בֶן נִתָּן-לָנוּ וְתַהִי הַמִּשְׁרָה עַל-שִׁכְמוֹ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פְּלָא יוֹעֵץ אֶל גְּבוּר אָבִי-עַד שָׁר-שְׁלוֹם

Ki-yèled yulàd lanù, ben nittàn lanù, va-tehì ha-misràh al-shichmò, va-yiqrà shemò

Pèle; Yo-ètz; El-Gibbòr; Abhì-Ad; Sar-Shalòm

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us, and the government will rest on his shoulder, and his name will be called;

Miraculous; Mentor; God of Might; Father forever; Ruler of Complete Peace

ישעיהו ט"ה/ה' Isaiah 9v6/h'

A reflection on Isaiah 9.6 ‘The words of Isaiah here, read each Christmas in carol services everywhere, can become so familiar; Isaiah is foretelling one who will come, a child who will be miraculous (Hebrew, pele), a mentor to the nations (Yo-etz), the God of power (El-Gibbor), the Father unlimited (Abhi ad) and Prince of wholeness and peace (Sar-shalom). We too easily pass over these awesome attributes of the coming Messiah, whom we encounter in Yeshua of Nazareth, born for us, living, dying and rising for us, praying for us now before the Father’s face, coming again for us as His bride.’

καὶ εἶρηκέ μοι· ἄρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου· ἡ γὰρ δύναμις μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ
τελειοῦται. ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα
ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Kai èereekè-mi, 'Arkì si ee chàris mou; ee gar dhýnamis mou en asthenèia teliòutai.' Èedhista
oun màllon kavchèesomai en tes asthenì-es mou, ìna episkeendèsee ep emè ee dhýnamis tou
Christòu.'

And He said to me, 'My grace is enough for you; for the purpose of my power is revealed in
the midst of weakness.' So with delight, I prefer to advertise how weak I am, so that
Messiah's power can set up camp in me!'

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 12.9

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 12.9 'Paul has asked the Lord to take from him an ongoing
challenge; whether that is physical, moral or emotional, he does not say. But the Lord tells
him that this challenge is keeping him dependent on God's power, for when we are weak,
God's strength comes into its own, and we prove His dependability. Paul would rather, then,
make known how weak he is than get in God's way by bigging himself up, so that when
God's power is revealed through Him, everyone marvels at how so great a God can move
through so weak a man!'

פְּדָה בְּשָׁלוֹם נַפְשִׁי מִקְרָב־לִי כִי-בְרַבִּים הָיוּ עִמָּדִי

Padàh bhe-shalòm naphshì miqràbh-li, ki bhe-rabbìm hayù immadi

He has redeemed my being wholly from what was attacking me, for there was a lot going on
with me

Psalm 55v18/תהילים נה"ח

A reflection on Psalm 55.18 'The Hebrew concept of 'shalom' has so much wrapped up
within it, because it is a word which conveys wholeness, not just peace. Health, wellbeing,
prosperity – an Israeli greeting a neighbour will ask them 'How is your shalom?' because
within that word is entailed the whole essence of human fulfilment. The Psalmist then has
been redeemed not just to calm tranquility, but to wholeness and completion, to 'shalom' in
every part of his life. No wonder he sings in praise of God's deliverance!'

**September 12 2017 Day 255 Readings Isaiah 10:1-11:16. 2 Corinthians 12:11-21, Psalm
56:1-13, Proverbs 23:6-8**

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שָׁרֵשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹמֵד לְנֶס עַמִּים אֲלֵיו גּוֹיִם יִדְרֹשׁוּ וְהָיְתָה מְנוּחַתוֹ כְּבוֹד
Ve-hayàh ba-yòm ha-hù shòresh Yishàì ashèr omèd le-nès amìim eylàyv goyìim yidròshu ve-
haytàh menuchatò kabhòd.

And on that day there will be a root from Jesse, that will stand as a signpost for the peoples,
and the nations will seek for Him, and glorious will be His place of rest.

Isaiah 11.10/ישעיהו יא"י

A reflection on Isaiah 11.10 'Isaiah speaks out the promise of a new shoot coming out of the
broken Davidic line after the tragedy of exile; he points inexorably to Messiah, the Son of
David, the one who will draw not just Israel but all peoples and nations to His glory, the
promise of life unlimited with Him in the coming together of earth and heaven. No wonder
the prophet foresees a place of amazing rest and peace in Him when He appears.'

τὰ μὲν σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου κατειργάσθη ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν πάσῃ ὑπομονῇ, ἐν
σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασι καὶ δυνάμεσι.

Ta men seemèia tou apostòlou katirgàsthee en ymìn en pàsee upomonèe, en seemèi-ees te kai tèrasi kai dhynàmesi.

For the signs of an apostle were evidenced among you, with all patience, with signs, wonders and miracles.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 12.12

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 12.12 ‘When an apostle is around, the signs of heaven and earth coming together are in evidence. The apostle’s heart is to bring the kingdom in, and to reveal the Father’s face to His people. This Paul has done in Corinth, patiently and faithfully.’

September 13 2017 Day 256 Readings Isaiah 12:1-14:32, 2 Corinthians 13:1-14, Psalm 57:1-11, Proverbs 23:9-11

ושאבתם-מים בששון ממעיני הישועה ואמרתם ביום ההוא הודו ליהוה קראו בשמו
הודיעו בעמים עלילתיו הזכירו כי נשגב שמו

U-shàbhtem mayim be-sassòn mi-ma’aynèy ha-Yeshùà va-amartèm ba-yòm ha-hù, ‘Hodù l’Adonài, kir’ù bhi-shemò, hodi’u bha-amim alilotàyv, hazkirù ki nishgàbh shemò.’

And you will draw water with joy from the wells of deliverance and you will say on that day, ‘Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name, proclaim to the peoples His miracles, highlight His name as the greatest.’

ישעיהו יב"ג ד/3,4

A reflection on Isaiah 12.3-4 ‘The picture of God’s presence as water is one found often in the Scriptures – as with the river in Ezekiel, or the cistern in Jeremiah. Here Isaiah speaks of drawing water from the ‘wells of salvation’ – ‘ma’aynéy ha-Yeshúa’ in Hebrew, a refreshment and a joy for Israel. We who draw on the supply of the Spirit through our King, the one named Yeshua, know that spring is bubbling up into life within us, just as He promised in John 7.37.’

Λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, χαίρετε, καταρτίζεσθε, παρακαλεῖσθε, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, εἰρηνεύετε· καὶ ὁ Θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ’ ὑμῶν.

Lipòn, adhelphì, chàirete, katartizesthe, parakalèsthe, to avtò phronèete, eerenèvete; kai o Theòs tees agàpees kai eerèneees èstai meth’ymòn.

So, in closing brothers and sisters, stay joyful, fully equipped, encouraged and of one mind, as peacemakers; and may the God of love and peace be with you.

2 Corinthians/Κορινθίους Β 13.11

A reflection on 2 Corinthians 13.11 ‘Paul closes his second letter to Corinth with an exhortation to his readers to stay joyful, peaceful, encouraged and united, with the God of love and peace at the heart of their community. When the people of God live like this, they portray the Kingdom and attract those in need of hope.’

September 14 2017 Day 257 Readings Isaiah 15:1-18:7, Galatians 1:1-24, Psalm 58:1-11, Proverbs 23:12

ביום ההוא ישעה האדם על-עשהו ועיניו אל-קדוש ישראל תראינה ולא ישעה אל-
המזבחות מעשה ידיו ואשר עשו אצבעותיו לא יראה והאשרים והחמנים

Ba-yòm ha-hù yiss’èh ha-adàm al-Osèhu ve-eynàyv el-Qedòsh Yisra’èl tirè’nah; ve-lò yis’èh el-ha-mizbechòt ma’asèh yadàyv, ve-ashèr asù etzbe’otàyv lo-yir’èh, ve-ha-asherim ve-ha-chammanim.

separates himself at table to sit with them, when before he was quite content to eat with everyone without discrimination. Favouritism, especially on grounds of keeping ritually separate from others, is ungodly; we need to be constantly finding ways of widening our fellowship, to include those from whom we might through our baser nature otherwise keep apart.'

September 16 2017 Day 259 Readings Isaiah 22:1-24:23, Galatians 2:17-3:9, Psalm 60:1-12, Proverbs 23:15-16

מִשָּׂא צַר הִילִילוּ אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ כִּי-שֻׁדָּד מִבַּיִת מִבּוֹא מֵאֶרֶץ כְּתִים נִגְלָה-לָמוֹ

Massà Tzor; heylilàh, aniyòt Tarshish, ki shuddàd mi-bàyt mibbò mey-èretz Kittim niglàh lamò.

An important word about Tyre; Howl, you ships of Tarshish (in Spain?), for it (Tyre) is destroyed, with no buildings left, and no access from the land of Cyprus, as they have been shown.

ישעיהו כג"א/1 Isaiah 23.1

A reflection on Isaiah 23.1 'Isaiah was prophesying around 700BC, at which time Tyre, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, was a thriving international port, a focus of trade and wealth, seemingly invincible on its man-made island, a mile off the mainland; yet in 332BC, Alexander the Great besieged the city-port, building a land-bridge through the sea, and razing it to the ground, and carrying off its wealth. Wherever man thinks he has achieved self-sufficiency and invulnerability apart from God, God will demonstrate his fragility and his need of a rescuer.'

Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι· ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

Christò synestàvromai; zo dhe oukèti egò, zee dhe en emèe Christòs, o dhe nyn zo en sarkì, en pìsti zo tee yìdu tou Theòu tou agapèesandòs me kai paradhòndos e-avtòn ypèr emòu.

I was co-crucified with Christ; so I no longer live, but it's Christ living in me, and though I still live physically, I am living totally reliant on the Son of God who loves me and surrendered Himself for me.

Galatians/Προς Γαλατας 2.20

A reflection on Galatians 2.20 'Paul makes it clear that there is no chance of acquittal before God through obeying the Law. Only Christ can be sufficient to deal with sin. If it were possible to achieve salvation through the law, then Jesus has died in vain!'

September 17 2017 Day 260 Readings Isaiah 25:1-28:13, Galatians 3:10-22, Psalm 61:1-8, Proverbs 23:17-18

וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא הִנֵּה אֵלֹהֵינוּ זֶה קִיְנוּנוּ לֹו וְיֹשִׁיעֵנוּ זֶה יְהוָה קִיְנוּנוּ לֹו נִגְלָה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בִישׁוּעָתוֹ

Ve-amàr bayòem ha-hù, 'Hinèh, Elohèynu zeh kivvìnu, ve-yoshi'èynu; zeh Adonài kivvìnu lo, nagilàh ve-nismechàh bi-Yeshuatò!'

And he will say on that day, 'Look, this is our God, who just as we expected saved us; This is the LORD we were hoping for, let us dance and rejoice over His Rescue!'

ישעיהו כה"ט/9 Isaiah 25.9

A reflection on Isaiah 25.9 'Isaiah's words remind us that the amazing deliverance God has accomplished for His people is worth singing and dancing about. The Hebrew here is reminiscent of Psalm 118.24, which Abraham Zvi Idelsohn put to music in the celebrated Jewish folk-song 'Havah nagilah, ve-nismechah' after the Balfour Declaration stating the

intention to make Israel a Jewish homeland in 1918. Where there is God's rescue, there should be exuberant celebration!

Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα· γεγραπταὶ γὰρ ἐπικαταρατὸς πᾶς ὁ κρεμᾶμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου. ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γενῆται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ Πνεύματος λάβωμεν δια τῆς πίστεως.

Christòs eemàs exeegòrasen ek tees katàras tou nòmou yenòmenos upèr eemòn katàra; yègraptai gar, 'epikatàratos pas o kremàmenos epì ksýlou,' ìna ees ta èthnee ee evloyèea tou Abhra-àm yèneetai en Christò Yeesòu, ìna teen epangelìan tou Pnèvmatos làbhomen dhià tees pìsteos.

The Messiah paid the price to release us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse in our place; for it is written, 'cursed is everyone hanged on a tree,' in order that the blessing of Abraham could be accessed by all nations through Messiah Jesus, so that we could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians/Προς Γαλατας 3.13,14

A reflection on Galatians 3.13,14 'Paul makes it wonderfully clear here that inclusion in the blessing promised through Abraham is not accessed through a code of regulations kept by an ethnic group, but by entrusting ourselves to what Israel's Messiah Jesus has achieved by His breathtaking rescue of mankind through His being hung on a hideous cross, enabling him to take the law's full weight in our place, releasing us into the possibility of God coming and residing in us by His Holy Spirit, thus being grafted into His beloved people.'

September 18 2017 Day 261 Readings Isaiah 28:14-30:11, Galatians 3:23-4:31, Psalm 62:1-12, Proverbs 23;19-21

הַפְּכֶכֶם אִם-כְּחֹמֶר הַיֹּצֵר יִחְשַׁב כִּי-יֹאמֶר מַעֲשֵׂה לַעֲשֵׂהוּ לֹא עָשִׂנִי וַיִּצֵּר אָמַר לִי צִרָוּ לֹא הַבִּין

Haphkekhèm im ke-chomèr ha-yotzèr yechashèbh, ki yòmer ma'asèh le-osèhu, 'Lo asàni' ve-yètzer amàr le-yotzrò, 'Lo hebhin.'

Your topsy-turvy perverseness could be thought of like the potter's clay saying to its maker, 'You didn't create me' or the thing designed saying to its designer, 'He doesn't understand.'

Isaiah 29v16/זט"ט"ו כט"ו

A reflection on Isaiah 29.16 'Through Isaiah the Holy Spirit asks us to consider the foolishness of people who try to write God out of their reckoning, and hide their actions as though they cannot be seen. It's as upside-down, says Isaiah as clay trying to control the potter, as the material calling the manufacturer stupid. Yet this is exactly what Israel has been doing in the lead up to exile, and it is just what man still does when he reckons without the reality of God.'

ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν·

Òste o nòmós paidhagogòs eemòn ees Christòn, ìna ek pìsteos dhikaiothòmen.

So the law was an escort to bring us to Messiah, so that we would be able to be made right through believing.

Galatians/Προς Γαλατας 3.25

being made into jumping hurdles and carrying weights, we can be sure it is not the freedom He has called us into.'

September 20 2017 Day 263 Readings Isaiah 33:10-36:22, Galatians 5:13-26, Psalm 64:1-10, Proverbs 23:23

וּפְדוּיֵי יְהוָה יָשׁבוּן וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל-רֵאשִׁים שָׁשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִשְׂגוּ וְנָסוּ יָגוֹן וְאַנְחָה

U-phedyèy Adonài yeshubhùn u-bha'ù Tziyòn be-rinnàh ve-simchàt olàm al roshàm, sasòn ve-simchàh yasìgu, ve-nasù yagòn ve-anachàh.

Then the ones the Lord has redeemed will return and come singing to Zion, and unlimited joy will wreath their heads; they will revel in celebration and rejoicing, their grief and groaning gone.

Isaiah 35.10"ישעיהו לה"י

A reflection on Isaiah 35.10 'When the storm is past, and the evil things are removed, there will come a dawn, a return of those whom the Lord has delivered from captivity; they will be wreathed in celebration, and their groaning and grief will be gone. This is the hope of the people of God, that there will be a day when pain and sorrow will be no more, and the Lord will set all things to rights when He restores all creation to its original balance, made possible through the saving death of Messiah, Jesus and His pioneering resurrection.'

Λέγω δέ, Πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε

Lègo dhe, Pnèvmati peripatèete kai epithymian sarkòs ou mee telèseete.

So I say, journey under the power of the Spirit and you will not fulfil the heartset of the merely physical.

Galatians/Προς Γαλατας 5.16

A reflection on Galatians 5.16 'Without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, we are like computers unconnected to the web. Our whole connection to heaven's reality beyond us is impaired, and our power-source is drained of life. When we live from the resources of the Holy Spirit, we find our meaning and destiny, and we are united to a universe of possibility in the love and grace of the Father. No wonder Paul calls us to journey in the power of the Spirit, not in our own limited strength!'

September 21 2017 Day 264 Readings Isaiah 37:1-38:22, Galatians 6:1-18, Psalm 65:1-13, Proverbs 23:24

יְהוָה לְהוֹשִׁיעַנִי וּנְגִיבֹתַי נִנְגֵן כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּינוּ עַל-בֵּית יְהוָה

Adonài le-hoshiyèni, u-neginotày ne-nagèn kol yemèy chayyèynu al-bèyt Adonài

(From Hezekiah's prayer after his healing)

The LORD will rescue me, and we will sing to the music of strings all the days of our lives in the house of the LORD

Isaiah 38v20"ישעיהו לח"כ

A reflection on Isaiah 38.20 'King Hezekiah experiences the wonder of God's healing, extending his life by His direct intervention. His reaction is to sing and make music, to express his celebration of this God who has saved, rescued and restored him. Sung and spoken praise is always appropriate to the God who Himself speaks and sings over His people.'

ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει.

Èkastos gar to ìdhion fortion bhistàsee.

For each one can carry themselves what they were designed for.

Galatians/Προς Γαλατας 6.5

A reflection on Galatians 6.5 'It may seem confusing to readers of the English translations of Paul that a few verses earlier in Galatians 6.2, he is urging us to 'carry one another's burdens', and here is calling us to bear our own. The difference is in the words Paul is using. The 'burdens' of verse 2 are pressures, too heavy to lift on our own; we need the support and help of others to work through them. But, like cargo vessels built to ship loads, we are made to purpose, and can be confident, not in our own strength, but in the creativity of God's design, that we will fulfil the destiny He has called us to.'

September 22 2017 Day 265 Readings Isaiah 39:1-41:16, Ephesians 1:1-23, Psalm 66:1-20, Proverbs 23:25-28

יְקוּי יְהוָה יִחְלִיפוּ כַח יַעֲלוּ אֲבָר כַּנְּשָׂרִים יְרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִגְעוּ יִלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיָּעֲפוּ

Ve-qovèy Adonài yachaliphu khòach, ya'alù èver ka-nesharìm; yarutzù ve-lo yiga'ù, yelkhù ve-lo yi'aphù

For those expectant for the LORD will replenish their energy, rising as on eagle's wings, running without tiring, journeying without exhaustion

ישעיהו מ"לא/40v31

A reflection on Isaiah 40.31 'When our source of energy comes from the Lord, we are not in danger of being exhausted. When we run on our batteries, as it were, we find that we soon run down and become depleted. Isaiah points us to the never-deficient source of supply in God's own person; we just need to be always connected to Him ongoing.'

הִנֵּה שְׂמִתִּיךָ לְמוֹרָג חָרוֹץ חָדָשׁ בְּעַל פִּיפְיוֹת תְּדוּשׁ הָרִים וְתִדְק וּגְבָעוֹת כְּמִץ תְּשִׂים תִּזְרֵם וְרוּחַ תִּשְׁאֵם וְסַעְרָה תִּפְיֵץ אֹתָם וְאַתָּה תִּגִּיל בִּיהוָה בְּקִדּוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּתְהַלֵּל
Hinèh, samtikh le-moràg charùtz, chadàsh, ba'ál piphyòt, tadùsh harìm ve-tadòq, u-gebha'òt ka-mòtz tasim tizrèm, ve-rùach tisa'èm u-se'aràh taphitz otàm, ve-atàh tagil b'Adonài, bi-qdòsh Yisra'èl tithalèl.

The LORD speaks to Israel

Look, I am going to set you like a sharp, new thresher, highly serrated, and you will even thresh the mountains to dust, reducing the hills to chaff, and as you winnow them, the wind will pick them up and a gale will blow them away, while you dance for joy in the LORD, crazy for the Holy One of Israel

ישעיהו מא"טו טז/41v15&16

A reflection on Isaiah 41.15-16 'The destiny of God's people does not lie in their own hands. God is acting through their history to bring to attention His purposes and plans for the world. Though they are small and otherwise insignificant, the Lord will accomplish His will for His people, bringing to a place of great celebration of His name and fame.'

καὶ τί τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ

Kai ti to yperbhàllon mèyethos tees dhynàmeos avtòu ees eemàs tous pistèvondas katà teev enèryian tou kràtous tees ischýos avtòu.

..And what is the immense greatness of His power towards us who believe, because of the energy of His mighty strength.

Ephesians/Εφεσσιους 1.19

A reflection on Ephesians 1.19 ‘Paul has himself witnessed the awesome power of God at work in response to prayer, through miracles, healings and resurrections in his day; he knows from experience, therefore, what he is praying for the Ephesian believers, and is asking that their eyes will be filled with greater light to see the immensity of God’s ability and energy to show His authority in the world He has created. Reading His words, may our hearts also rise to take hold of the horizon of God’s limitless resources, to see in our time His Kingdom fully come and Messiah’s return.’

September 23 2017 Day 266 Readings Isaiah 41:17-43:13, Ephesians 2:1-22, Psalm 67;1-7, Proverbs 23:29-35

כי-תַעְבֵּר בַּמַּיִם אֶתְךָ-אֲנִי וּבִנְהַרֹת לֹא יִשְׁטַפּוּךָ כִּי-תֵלֵךְ בַּמּוֹ-אֵשׁ לֹא תִכְנֹה וְלִהְבֵּה לֹא תִבְעַר-רִגְלְךָ

Ki ta'abhòr ba-màyim, itkhà anì, u-bhanhoròt lo yishtephùkha, ki tèleykh bemò esh, lo tikkavèh, ve-lehabhàh lo tikh'âr bakh.

For when you cross the waters, I am with you, and through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you; for when you walk through fire, you will not be burned, nor shall the flames consume you.

Isaiah 43.2/ב"ב"שעיהו

A reflection on Isaiah 43.2 ‘The promise to those God has rescued is one of protection and covering, even through the water and fire of adversity. The Lord has not promised unmitigated comfort to His people, but that in the adventure of His shaping and transforming, even in the rocky places, He will not let go of us but will walk us through the storm, if we will entrust ourselves wholeheartedly to Him.’

ὅτι ἦτε ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγγύς ἐγενήθητε ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Òti èete en to kairò ekìno chorìs Christòu, apeelotriomèni tees politèeas tou Israèl kai ksèni ton dhiatheekòn tees epangelias, elpìdha mee èchondes kai àthei en to kòsmo. Nynì de en Christò Ieesòu ymèes èe-pote òndes makràn engýs eyenètheete en to àimati tou Christòu.

For at that time you were without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Jesus, you who were once so distant have become close through the blood of Jesus.

Ephesians/Εφεσσιους 2.12-13

A reflection on Ephesians 2. 12-13 ‘As a Jew, Paul is quite clear about the state of non-Jews without Messiah; they are alienated from the covenants made with Israel and the associated promises; they are without hope and without God in the world. But now that Jesus, ‘God with us’, has been revealed and has made the once-for-all sacrifice on the cross for the failures and brokenness of the whole world, all of those blessings given to Israel are showered upon all those who put their trust in Israel’s Messiah, and they become included in the commonwealth of God’s people, because of God’s covenant-bonded ‘hesed’-grace, through faith!’

September 24 2017 Day 267 Readings Isaiah 43:14-45:10, Ephesians 3:1-21, Psalm 68:1-18, Proverbs 24:1-2

רְנוּ שָׁמַיִם כִּי-עָשָׂה יְהוָה הַרְיֵעוּ תַחְתִּיּוֹת אֲרָץ פְּצְחוּ הַרִים רְנָה יַעַר וְכָל-עֵץ בּוֹ כִּי-גָאֵל יְהוָה
יַעֲקֹב וּבְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִתְפָּאֵר

Ròni, shamàyim, ki asàh Adonài! Hari'ù tachtiyòt àretz, pitz-chù harim rinnah ya'àr, ve-khòl etz bo, ki ga'àl Adonài Ya'aqòbh u-bhe-Yisra'èl yitpa'àr!

Burst into song, you skies, for the LORD has done it! Shout out, on the earth below, let it out and sing, you hills, forests and trees in them, for the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has shown Himself to be amazing through Israel!

Isaiah 44v23/כג"ד"א"י

A reflection on Isaiah 44.23 'God's rescue of Israel has cosmic consequences. The people of God are the demonstration of His glory and power, which has culminated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah of Israel, giving access to all nations to the covenant-bonded grace of the Lord. No wonder the prophet calls creation to celebrate!'

Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ὧν αἰτούμεθα ἢ νοοῦμεν, κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν, αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

To dhe dhynamèno ypèr pànda pièesai yperekperissou ón aitòumetha ee nó-òumen, katà teen dhýnamin teen energoumènen en eemìn, avtò ee dhòxa en tee ekkleesià kai en Christò Ieesòu ees pàsas tas yeneàs tou aiðnos ton aiðnon; amèen.

So to the One who has the ability to go way beyond anything we could ask or even think of, because of that power which is already energising us, may He be seen as magnificent through the church and in Messiah Jesus throughout all generations, through unlimited time; yes, indeed!

Ephesians/Εφεσσιους 3.20,21

A reflection on Ephesians 3.20-21 'God's power, the power of His Holy Spirit, is already energising His people, and so already the provision is there for God to act in ways far beyond our limited imagination of Him; the purpose of that breaking out of His life in His people is to make Him look magnificent, and for Jesus the Messiah to be revealed, for ages unlimited. Paul catches the sight of where it could go, and, despite His people still messing up, it is still God's intention to be seen in His people because of Jesus.'

יְקוּם אֱלֹהִים יְפוּצוּ אוֹיְבָיו וַיְנוּסוּ מִשְׁנֵאָיו מִפְנֵיו

Yakùm Elohìm, yaphùtzu oyevàyv, ve-yanùsu mesanàyv mi-panàyv

Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; and let His haters flee from His face

Psalm 68v1/א"ח"א"י

A reflection on Psalm 68.1 'The Singer recalls in the opening of this Psalm the ancient cry of Israel in the desert, as she broke camp to follow the Lord's cloud and fire to the next place of her dwelling. In the original Hebrew language, there is a rhythm to the call which has a militant, insistent beat to it. It must have been impressive indeed to see God's people on the move, chanting these words as they went before and behind the box-chest of God's presence, the protector of their journeying. In setting out today to follow the cloud and fire of God where He leads us, let us not be fearful or half-hearted, but go with the rhythm of the Spirit's power pulsing through us to make way for the Kingdom.'

September 25 2017 Day 268 Readings Isaiah 45:11-48:11, Ephesians 4:1-16, Psalm 68:19-35, Proverbs 24:3-4

בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי יָצָא מִפִּי צְדָקָה דְבַר וְלֹא יָשׁוּב כִּי-לִי תִכְרַע כָּל-בְּרֵךְ תִּשְׁבַּע כָּל-לָשׁוֹן
Bi nishba'ti yatzà mippi tzedaqàh dabhàr, ve-lò yashùbh, ki li tikhrà kol bèrekh, tishbà kol
lashòn

I have bound myself with an oath that has come from my mouth in integrity, not to be rescinded, that every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will vow to me

ישעיהו מה"כג/45v Isaiah

A reflection on Isaiah 45.23 'This prophetic word from Isaiah must have been in Paul's mind when he wrote to the Philippians that one day every knee would bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. God's purpose from the start has been to restore not just Israel, but through them and the Messiah's sacrifice, to restore the world to Himself. The bowing and vowing foretold by Isaiah and by Paul is not a wielding of power, but a love-response to an awesomely loving God.'

μέχρι κατανήσωμεν οί πάντες εις την ένότητα της πίστεως και της έπιγνώσεως του υίου του Θεου, εις άνδρα τέλειον, εις μέτρον ήλικίας του πληρώματος του Χριστου

Mèchri katandèsomen ee pàndes ees teen enòteeta tees pìsteos kai tees epignòseos tou Yiòu tou Theòu, ees àndra tèleion, ees mètron eelikias tou pleeròmatos tou Christòu.

Until we all reach oneness in our faith and full experience of the Son of God, measured by the maturity of the full personhood of the Messiah.

Ephesians/Εφεσιους 4.13

A reflection on Ephesians 4.13 'A few verses earlier, in Eph.4.3, Paul has urged his readers to strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; here he is referring to a unity which is not yet completed, the unity of the faith and full experience of the Messiah's life. Jesus' people are called to unequivocal togetherness in the Spirit, who joins us, but to a progressive walking together into revelation, constantly repenting of our flawed understanding of the Lord, constantly repairing our experience of Him, until we finally reach together the full maturity of Messiah, which will bring us eye to eye with Him as His beloved bride.'

September 26 2017 Day 269 Readings Isaiah 48:12-50:11, Ephesians 4:17-32, Psalm 69:1-18, Proverbs 24:5-6

מִי בְכֶם יִרָא יְהוָה שֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִלְךָ חֹשֵׁכִים וְאֵין נֹגֵה לוֹ יִבְטַח בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְיִשְׁעַן בְּאֵלֵהוּ
Mi bhakhèm yerèh Adonài, shomèa be-qòl abhdò, ashèr halàkh chashekhìm ve-èyn nogàh lo?
Yibhtàch be-shèm Adonài, ve-yisha'èn be-Elohàyv

Who among you is in awe of the LORD, listening to the voice of His servant, even when he walks in the dark and there's no glimmer of light? Let him rely on the name of the LORD and lean his weight on His God.

ישעיהו נ"א/50v Isaiah

A reflection on Isaiah 50.10 'Isaiah prepares God's people for the days when there seems to be no breakthrough, when we walk in darkness. Yet even in that place, in awe of God, we can lean our whole weight on Him knowing that He will not drop us.'

καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρόσεως.

Kai mee lypèete to Pnèvma to Àyion tou Theou, en o esphrayistheete ees eemèran apolytròseos.

And don't bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit, by whom you are marked out for that coming day of deliverance.

Ephesians/Εφεσσιους 4.30

A reflection on Ephesians 4.30 'The believers do not lie, do not harbor anger, but express it meekly and resolve it before it goes bitter; they do not steal, but earn a living through honest work. They don't use their mouths to mock and shock, but instead speak to encourage and affirm. Overall, believers live in constant concert with the Holy Spirit, refusing to let bitterness, hatred or malice interfere with their walk with God. Instead, they reflect Christ's life by being compassionate and releasing of others from their debts of fault and blame.'

וְאֲנִי תְפִלַּתִּי-לְךָ יְהוָה עַתָּה רָצוֹן אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב-חַסְדֶּךָ עִנְיִי בְּאַמֶּת יִשְׁעֶךָ

Va-anì tephillatì le-khà Adonài et ratzòn; Elohim be-ràbh chasdèkha anèyni be-èmet yishèkha
As for me, my prayer is coming to you, LORD, just at the right moment; O God, in the abundance of your covenant-bonded grace, respond to me out of the reliability of your rescue.

Psalm 69v13/ג"י/סט"י תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 69.13 'God's rescue comes out of His covenant. It is because He has obliged Himself to His people that we can be sure of His response. His salvation, His rescue is assured by His own character; He cannot be untrue to His nature.'

גִּבֹר-חָכָם בְּעוֹז וְאִישׁ-דָּעַת מְאִמָּץ-כֹּחַ

Gèbher chakhàm ba-òz, ve-ish da'àt mé'amètz kòach.

The wise man is a man of strength, and the person of experience grows in power.

Proverbs 24.5/ה"ה/משלי

A reflection on Proverbs 24.5 'While the human tendency is to equate physical strength with power, God's view is that it is experience and discernment that exert the greatest influence and authority.'

September 27 2017 Day 270 Readings Isaiah 51:1-53:12, Ephesians 5:1-33, Psalm 69:19-36, Proverbs 24:7

כָּלֵנוּ כִצְאָן תְּעִינוּ אִישׁ לְדַרְכּוֹ פָּנֵינוּ וַיְהוֶה הַפְּגִיעַ בּוֹ אֶת עוֹן כָּלֵנוּ

Kulànu ka-tzòn ta'ínu, ish le-darkò paninu, v'Adonài hipghìya bo et-avòn kulànu

All of us like sheep have strayed, each to his own way has turned, but the LORD has inflicted on Him the failure of us all

Isaiah 53v6/ו"ג/ישעיהו

A reflection on Isaiah 53.6 'Isaiah sees down the centuries ahead of him to the one great sacrifice of Messiah Jesus for the failures of the world and the sins of all. His shed blood alone provides an escape from the vicious downward spiral of brokenness and death we otherwise face.'

καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνω, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν ἀσωτία, ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν Πνεύματι, λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ Κυρίῳ

Kai mee methýskeshte ñno, en ò-estin asotìa, allà pleeròusthe en Pnèvmati, lalòundes eavtìs psalmìs kai ýmnis kai odhàis pnevmatikàis, àdhondes kai psàllondes en tee kardhia ymòn to Kyriò.

And don't get drunk on wine, which is being out of control, but keep being filled with the Spirit, sharing with one another in the songs of Scripture, songs you have written and spontaneous Spirit-songs, singing and playing music from your hearts for the Lord.

Ephesians/Εφεσιους 5.18,19

A reflection on Ephesians 5.18,19 ‘On the day that the Holy Spirit was released on the believers at Pentecost, they were so expressive in their celebration of God that they were accused of being drunk (Acts 2.13); but being out of it on alcohol means losing control, while being full of God’s Spirit means being totally conscious of the awesome joy of God’s own presence filling us, leading us into singing, playing and dancing for Him. In today’s Psalm 69, in verses 30 and 31, we learn that God loves a song more than sacrifices; making wonderful music makes God’s name greater – we cannot overdo our praise of such an amazing Saviour!’

September 28 2017 Day 271 Readings Isaiah 54:1-57:14, Ephesians 6:1-24, Psalm 70:1-5, Proverbs 24:8

בְּרַגַע קָטַן עָזַבְתִּיךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדוֹלִים אֶקְבְּצֶךָ בְּשֹׁצֵר קָצָף הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי רָגַע מִמֶּךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים
עוֹלָם רַחַמְתִּיךָ אָמַר גְּאֻלֶּךָ יְהוָה

Be-règa qatàn azavtìkh, u-ve-rachamìim gedolìim aqabtzèkh; be-shètzepph qètzepph histàrti phanài règa mimèkh, u-ve-chèsed olàm rachamtìkh, amàr go'alèkh Adonài

For a little moment I left you , but with huge compassion I will gather you in; in a torrent of anger, I hid my face for a moment from you, but with unbounded covenant-commitment I will show you my visceral compassion, says your Redeemer, the LORD.

Isaiah 54v7,8/ח"ו י"ז ע"ה

A reflection on Isaiah 54.7,8 ‘The overwhelming weight of God’s attitude towards His people is visceral compassion and irrevocable covenant-bonded grace. As the sun still shines while storm clouds overshadow it, so His face is never turned away from us, only veiled by circumstances. His covenant to His people is non-negotiable, and He will fulfil His desire to be with us.’

καὶ τὴν περικεφαλαίαν τοῦ σωτηρίου δέξασθε, καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν τοῦ Πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ῥῆμα Θεοῦ.

Kai teen perikephalàian tou soteeriou dhèxasthe, kai teen màchairan tou Pnèvmatos, ò-estin rhèema Theòu.

And make salvation the protection for your head, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the now-word of God.

Ephesians/Εφεσιους 6.17

A reflection on Ephesians 6.17 ‘Among the armour Paul urges the Ephesians to put on are two elements essential for spiritual wellbeing; God’s deliverance, rescue and healing are to be our head-protector, keeping our mind from attack and our face from being turned away from the Lord, and the sword we bear is to be the ‘rheema’ now-word of God, the sharp parry of just the right thrust of insight at the moment it is needed, to knock the enemy off-balance when he thinks he has us in his grip.’

September 29 2017 Day 272 Readings Isaiah 57:15-59:21, Philippians 1:1-26, Psalm 71:1-24, Proverbs 24:9-10

וַיֵּרָא כִּי-אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתוֹמֵם כִּי אֵין מַפְגִּיעַ וְתוֹשַׁע לוֹ זָרְעוֹ וְצָדִיקָתוֹ הִיא סִמְכָתָהּ
Va-yàr ki eyn ish, va-yishtomèm ki eyn maphgìa; va-toshà' lo zero'ò, ve-tzidkatò hi semakhàt-hu

For He saw that there was nobody, He was astonished that there was no one to push through; so He rescued man with His own arm, supported by His own integrity.

ישעיהו נט"ט/16v59 Isaiah

A reflection on Isaiah 59.16 'Isaiah tells us that God had no way of reaching through to us to rescue us from our total failure, other than to come Himself and work the miracle of rescue which He has achieved by His own strength and integrity.'

πεποιθὼς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

Pepithòs avtò tòuto, òti o enarxàmenos en ymìn èrgon agathòn epitelèsee àchri eemèras Yeesòu Christòu

I am convinced of this, that having begun good work in you, He will bring it to completion by that day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians/Φιλιππησιους 1.6

A reflection on Philippians 1.6 'Paul is sure that what God starts, He completes, including the fine work He has begun in those in Philippi who follow Jesus as Lord, being shaped day by day into His likeness. It's important to remember that the process of becoming like Jesus as His people takes a moment to begin, a lifetime to complete; but the promise is that He will do what He set out to do in us.'

וְגַם עַד-זְקִנָּה וְשִׁבְיָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-תַּעֲזָבֵנִי עַד-אֲגִיד זְרוּעֶךָ לְדוֹר לְכָל-יְבֹא גְבוּרָתְךָ
Ve-gàm ad-ziqnàh ve-seybhàh, Elohim, al-ta'azbhèyni ; ad-aggid zerò'akha le-dòr, le-khòl yabhò, gebhuratèkha.

So even in old age and greying, O God, don't abandon me; then I can tell about Your strong arms to the next generation, and to all who are to come, about Your power.

תהילים עא"ח/18v71 Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 71.18 'The witness of ageing believers for the generations arising after them is powerful in modelling the faithfulness and dependability of God, even in the midst of the challenges of physical decline. The walk and formation of discipleship goes on, day by day, until the last day of the years in our life.'

September 30 2017 Day 273 Readings Isaiah 60:1-62:5, Philippians 1:27-2:18, Psalm 72:1-20, Proverbs 24:11-12

שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ בִּיהוָה תִּגְלַל נַפְשִׁי בְּאֱלֹהֵי כִי הִלְבִּישָׁנִי בְּגָדֵי-יֵשַׁע מְעִיל צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי כְּחַתָּן
יְכַהֵן פָּאָר וְכִכְלָה תַּעֲדָה כְּלִיָּה

Sos asis b'Adonài, tagèl napshi b'Elohài, ki hilbishàni bigdey-yèsha, me'ìl tzedaqàh ye'atàni, ke-chatàn yekhahèn pe-èr, ve-kha-khallàh ta-dèh khey-lèyha

I will celebrate, yes, celebrate in the LORD, jumping for joy in my soul in God, for He has clothed me in a salvation-suit, in a coat of integrity He has covered me, like a bridegroom decked out in his finery, and like a bride adorned in her jewellery.

ישעיהו סא"י/10v61 Isaiah

A reflection on Isaiah 61.10 'In this amazing chapter, quoted by Jesus at the inauguration of His ministry in Galilee, the prophet ends up with a celebration of what the Lord is doing in his being because of the rescue and deliverance the Messiah, the anointed One is bringing; it's being freed from prison and dressed for a wedding-day all rolled into one, when the Lord acts to restore the people He loves!'

Ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ
Os en morphèe Theou ypàrchon ooch arpagmòn eeyèesato to èenai ìsa Theò
Though He had the form of God, He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped at.
Philippians/Προς Φιλιππησιους 2.6

A reflection on Philippians 2.6 'Each one of Satan's temptations of Jesus challenges Him, as God's Son, to use His power in solo action. Paul rightly discerns that Jesus gives up that right, to be as we are, dependent on His Father and the Holy Spirit. '

October 1 2017 Day 274 Readings Isaiah 62:6-65:25, Philippians 2:19-3:3, Psalm 73:1-28, Proverbs 24:13-14

חַסְדֵי יְהוָה אֲזְכִיר תְהִלֹת יְהוָה כֹּעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר-גָּמְלָנוּ יְהוָה וְרַב-טוֹב לְבַיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-
גָּמְלָם כְּרַחֲמָיו וְכָרַב חַסְדָּיו

Chasdèy Adonài azkìr, tehillòt Adonài ke-àl kol ashèr gemalànu Adonài ve-ràbh tobh le-bhèyt Yisra'èl ashèr gemalàm ke-rachamàv u-kheròbh chasadàv.

I will recount the covenant-bonded graces of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord because of all that He has lavished upon us and the immense good shown to the house of Israel, by which He has satisfied them through His compassion and so very many of His covenant-bonded graces.

Isaiah 63.7/ז"ז ישעיהו סג"ז

A reflection on Isaiah 63.7 'The prophet, overwhelmed at the compassion and covenant-bonded grace of the Lord shown to Israel, records here his intention to keep on record the sheer weight of the generosity of God over the generations of His people. Thankfulness is a place of celebration and hope; to live there is a privilege.'

Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ.
To lipòn adelphì moo, chàirete en Kyrìo.
Besides all this, my brothers and sisters , be joyful in the Lord.
Philippians/ Προς Φιλιππησιους 3.1a

A reflection on Philippians 3.1a 'In Greece today, it's common to hear people greet each other with the word 'chèrete!' - 'rejoice!', the word Paul used here writing to these first European believers in Messiah. We are still called, in the midst of challenges and pain, to lift our hearts and anchor them in future hope which only Jesus offers us; rejoice today in the Lord.'

October 2 2017 Day 275 Readings Isaiah 66:1-24, Philippians 3:4-21, Psalm 74:1-23, Proverbs 24:15-16

כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אָמוּ תִנְחַמְנוּ כִּן אֲנֹכִי אֲנַחֲמְכֶם וּבִירוּשָׁלַם תִּנְחַמּוּ

Ke-ish ashèr immò tenachamènnu, ken anokhì anachèmkhem, u-bh'Irushalàyim, tenuchamù
Like each one who is comforted by his mother, so I will comfort you, and concerning

Jerusalem, you will be assured

Isaiah 66v13/ ג"ג ישעיהו סו"ג

A reflection on Isaiah 66.13 ‘This is one of those several places in Scripture where God likens Himself to a mother; the feminine is part of the image of God, counterpart of the masculine in Him. The nurture, the compassion (the word is linked in Hebrew to the womb) and the tenderness of God are sourced in that deep motherhood which is in Him and imparted to humanity through female being.’

ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα
Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ὃς μετασχηματίζει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν
εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸ σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν
ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα.

Eemòn gar to politevma en ouranìs ypàrchee, ex ou kai sotèera apekdhechòmetha Kýrion
Yeesòun Christòn, os metascheematisee to sòma tees tapinòseos eemòn ees to yenèsthai avtò
sýmmorphon to sòmati tees dhòxees avtòu katà teen enèryian tou dhýnasthai avtòn kai
ypotàxai avtò ta pànta.

For we are among the citizens of heaven, from where we also await expectantly the rescuer, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reconfigure our unsophisticated bodies into a state of being of the same nature as His magnificent body by means of the outworking of his ability to bring everything under His rule.

Philippians/Φιλιππησιους 3.20,21

A reflection on Philippians 3.20.21 ‘The society which believers belong to is not of this world, but its principle is heavenly, rooted in the unseen realm. Until His coming, Jesus is working in His body, His people, to transform it into His own likeness, crowning that process with the moment of final resurrection to eternal life. Paul commends this attitude to his brothers, for it will keep them anchored into the Lord’

הַרִימָה פְּעַמְיָךְ לְמַשְׁאוֹת נֶצַח כָּל-הָרַע אוֹיֵב בְּקִדְשׁ

Harimah phe'amèkha le-mashu'òt nètzach, kol he-rà oyèbh ba-qòdesh.

Turn your footsteps towards these unending ruins, all this wickedness of the enemy in the holy place.

Psalms 74.3/ג"ג תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 74.3 ‘As the Singer looks upon the ruins of the Temple, the destruction done by the enemies of God’s people, he laments, but cries out to the Lord to return and vindicate His name and His glory. When the presence of God seems far away, we need to cry to Him to turn to us again and restore His praise in the place where His people dwell.’

October 3 2017 Day 276 Readings Jeremiah 1:1-2:30, Philippians 4:1-23, Psalm 75:1-10, Proverbs 24:17-20

הַהִימִיר גּוֹי אֱלֹהִים וְהִמָּה לֹא אֱלֹהִים וְעַמִּי הִמִּיר כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּלוֹא יוֹעִיל

Ha-hemìr goy Elohìm, ve-hèmmah lo elohìm? Ve-ammì hemìr kebhodò belò yo-ìl

What nation would exchange God for what are non-gods? Yet my people exchanged their Glory for something utterly worthless.

Jeremiah 2v11/ ירמיהו ב"א

A reflection on Jeremiah 2.11 ‘Jeremiah, speaking out for God towards the sordid end of Judah’s slide into spiritual chaos, now on the brink of deportation to Babylon, points to the rotten core of their malaise. They have reneged on the covenant with their Maker and Lover, and turned to non-god idols which bring them nothing. God is not judging them, rather they

have left the spring of fresh water and pretended they are getting good supplies from empty wells, leaving them dry and weak. (see 2.13)'

πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ.

Pànda ischýo en to endhynamòundi mé Christò.

I can prevail in all situations when Christ is empowering me.

Philippians/Φιλιππησιους 4.13

A reflection on Philippians 4.13 'The context of Paul's bold statement that nothing is beyond him when Christ is his 'dynamo', refers to the whole gamut of life situations he has found himself thrown into, detailed in the previous verse – poverty and plenty, satisfaction and hunger, fulfilment and need; the key to reigning in life is Christ's empowering, no matter what the circumstances.'

October 4 2017 Day 277 Readings Jeremiah 2:31-4:18, Colossians 1:1-17, Psalm 76:1-12, Proverbs 24:21-22

אֶכֶן לְשִׁקֵּר מִגְבְּעוֹת הַמֶּוֹן הַרִים אֶכֶן בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ תִשׁוּעַת יִשְׂרָאֵל

Akhèn la-shèqer mig-bha'òt hamòn harim, akhèn b'Adonài Elohèynu teshu'at Yisra'èl.

It's truly pointless going to hills and mountain-ranges for help when, for sure, the rescuer of Israel is the Lord our God.

Jeremiah 3.23/ירמיהו ג"כג

A reflection on Jeremiah 3.23 'The mountain heights of the world naturally inspire awe, but Jeremiah warns against worshipping them or replacing the Creator's glory with them; there is only one source of rescue for God's people, only one place of safety – not impersonal nature, but the person of the Lord God Himself. The Singer of Israel echoes this in Psalm 121.1, when he says 'As I lift my eyes to the hills, I ask, 'Where does my help come from?' – my help comes from the Lord, maker of earth and sky.'

ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως

Òs-estin eekòn tou Theòu tou aoràtou, protòtokos pàsees ktìseos.

He is the image of God unseen, the first-born of all creation.

Colossians/Προς Κολοσσαεις 1.15

A reflection on Colossians 1.15 'Paul is unequivocal in his assertion of the significance of Messiah Jesus ; He is the exact representation, the visible copy of God on earth. Just as the 'icon' of Caesar was carried on all Roman coins, Jesus is the perfect 'icon' of God for all to see. Because of this, He is also the heir of all things; in particular, He is the first human to experience the full restoration of resurrection, which will one day be shared with all creation.'

October 5 2017 Day 278 Readings Jeremiah 4:19-6:15, Colossians 1:18-2:7, Psalm 77:1-20, Proverbs 24:23-25

כִּי אָוִיל עַמִּי אֹתִי לֹא יָדְעוּ בָנִים סְכָלִים הֵמָּה וְלֹא בָנִים חֲכָמִים הֵמָּה לְהַרְעֵנִי
וְלֹא הֵיטִיב לֹא יָדְעוּ

Ki evìl ammì, otì lo yada`ù; banìm sekhilìm hèmmah, ve-lò nevonìm hèmmah; chakhamìm hèmmah le-harà, u-lehetìv lo yada`ù

For my people are stupid, they don't relate to me; feckless sons are they, lacking discernment are they, wise are they in evil things, yet how to do good, they have no idea

Jeremiah 4v22/ירמיהו ד"כב

A reflection on Jeremiah 4.22 'Jeremiah's words highlight the wilful turning from the Lord which Judah is pursuing. They refuse to know the Lord, which in Hebrew terms, means they

refuse to relate to, to experience the Lord. They are ‘clever in doing evil’, yet have no idea how to do right. Their behaviour is leading them in one, terminal direction - to crisis.’

האֹוֹתֵי לֹא-תִירָאוּ נְאֻם-יְהוָה אִם מִפְּנֵי לֹא תַחֲלִילוּ אֶשֶׁר-שָׁמַתִּי חוֹל גְּבוּל לַיָּם חֶק-עוֹלָם וְלֹא יַעֲבְרֶנָּהוּ וַיִּתְגַּעְשׂוּ וְלֹא יוּכְלוּ וְהָמוּ גְלִיו וְלֹא יַעֲבְרֶנָּהוּ

Ha-otì lo-tirà'u, ne-ùm Adonài, im mi-panài lo tachìlu ashèr samtì chol gebhùl la-yàm, chaq olàm ve-lò ya'abhrènhu va-yitga'àshu ve-lò yukhàlu ve'hàmu galàyv ve-lò ya'abhrùnhu
Do you not fear me? says the Lord, should you not be quaking in my presence, who set the sand as a frontier for the ocean, an everlasting boundary that it cannot go beyond? Though the waves break upon it, they cannot overcome it; they roar, but they can't get past it
Jeremiah 5v22/ ירמיהו ה"כב

A reflection on Jeremiah 5.22 ‘There is something awesome about the sea which uniquely reflects the craft of the Creator. When we stand on the beach, looking to the horizon, we are moved at the sheer expanse of water, and its power. Jeremiah here highlights this aspect of the Lord’s genius seen in the ocean shore in addressing Judah’s lack of worship towards God’s majesty.’

τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν, νυνὶ δὲ ἐφανερώθη τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ

To mystèrion to apokekrymmènon apò ton aiònon kai apò ton yeneòn, nynì dhe ephaneròthee tis ayiees avtou.

The secret hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to His dedicated people.
Colossians/Προς Κολοσσαεις 1.26

A reflection on Colossians 1.26 ‘One thing Paul was contending with in Colossae, as elsewhere, was the ‘secret knowledge’ or ‘gnosis’ making inroads into the churches he had established. This departure from the good news of Jesus claimed access to salvation and to God by means of hidden passwords and esoteric doctrines. Paul says that while there was formerly a certain hiddenness to God’s plan of rescue, now in Messiah Jesus, the secret is out and all who yield themselves wholeheartedly to His person and provision can know for themselves the glory of this wonderful revelation.’

October 6 2017 Day 279 Readings Jeremiah 6:16-8:7, Colossians 2:8-23, Psalm 78:1-31, Proverbs 24:26

גַּם-חֲסִידָהּ בְּשָׁמַיִם יָדְעָה מוֹעֲדֶיהָ וְתֹר וְסִיס וְעִגּוּר שְׁמֶרוּ אֶת-עֵת בְּאֵנָה וְעַמִּי--לֹא יָדְעוּ אֵת מִשְׁפַּט יְהוָה

Gam chasidàh ba-shamàyim yad'àh mo'adèha, ve-tòr ve-sùs ve-agùr shomrù et-èyt bo-anàh, ve-ammi lo yad'ù et mishpat Adonài.

Even the stork in the sky knows her seasons, and the ring-dove, swallow and thrush keep to their times of migration, but my people do not discern the Lord’s order of things.

Jeremiah 8.7/ ירמיהו ח"ז

A reflection on Jeremiah 8.7 ‘The Hebrew word ‘mishpat’ has a range of meanings, mostly translated into English as ‘justice’ or ‘judgement’, but it is at root about the balance of creation set in place by God, keeping chaos at bay, sowing order, rhythm and beauty into the cosmos. Here Jeremiah laments the fact that, while the birds of the air know the patterns of their migration and the seasons, God’s people, who have been given His covenant promises, are ignorant of the ‘mishpat’, God’s order of things concerning their relationship with Him, evidenced by their walking away from His ways into idolatry.’

ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς, καὶ ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας.
Òti en avtò katikèi pan to plèeroma tees Theòteetos somatikòs, kai estè en avtò pepleeromèni, os èstin ee kephalèe pàsees archèes kai exousias.

(Paul writes about Jesus;)

'For in Him lives the complete totality of who God is, in physical form, and you are made complete by Him, the one who is the source of all rule and authority.'

Colossians/Κολοσσαίαις 2.9,10

A reflection on Colossians 2.9.10 'With ten Greek words, in v.9 Paul states the most dynamic reality concerning the person of Christ ever written. Christ appeared fully 'corporeal', 'incarnate', and not 'like a body' as the Docetists wanted it. And this fulness dwells, now - it is not a past event, but a present reality. In the presence of the Father stands the physical, glorified body of Jesus Christ. '

October 7 2017 Day 280 Readings Jeremiah 8:8-9:26, Colossians 3:1-17, Psalm 78:32-55, Proverbs 24:27

כָּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִתְהַלְלֵךְ חָכְמָתְךָ בְּחִכְמָתְךָ וְאֵלֵי יִתְהַלְלֵךְ הַגְּבוּרָה בְּגִבּוּרָתָהּ אֵלֵי יִתְהַלְלֵךְ עֲשִׂיר
בְּעֲשָׂרָה כִּי אִם-בְּזֵאת יִתְהַלְלֵךְ הַמְתַּהַלְלֵךְ הַשֶּׁכֶל וְיִדַּע אוֹתִי--כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה הַסּוּד מִשְׁפָּט
וְיִדְקָה בְּאַרְץ כִּי-בְאֵלֶּה חִפְצָתִי נְאֻם-יְהוָה

Ko amàr Adonài, 'Al-yit-hallèl chakhàm be-chokhmatò, ve-àl yit-hallèl ha-gibbòr big'bhuratò ashìr , al-yit-hallèl ashìr be-ashrò; ki im be-zòt yithallèl ha-mit-hallèl, haskèl ve-yaddà otì, ki anì Adonài, òseh chèsed, mishpàt u-tzedaqàh ba-àretz, ki bhe-èleh chaphàtzti', ne-ùm Adonài.

This is what the LORD says, 'Let the wise not big up their wisdom, nor the powerful crow about their power, nor the rich make a big noise about how rich they are;

Rather if anyone wants to celebrate, let them celebrate this, that they have a relationship with me, for I am the LORD, who acts with covenant commitment, maintaining the cosmic balance, with integrity throughout the earth, for in these things I take great pleasure, says the LORD

Jeremiah 9v22,23/ ירמיהו ט" כב כג

A reflection on Jeremiah 9.22,23 'If anyone wants to boast, says the Lord through Jeremiah, let them boast in the fact that they know me. Knowing in the Hebrew language is far more than simple acquaintance. It is knowing by experience; hence, at its most intimate, Adam knows Eve his wife, and a child is born of their knowing. God invites us to experience Him, to be intimate with Him, the one who holds the earth in balance.'

Ἐνδύσασθε οὖν, ὡς ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἅγιοι καὶ ἠγαπημένοι, σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμού, χρηστότητα, ταπεινοφροσύνην, πραότητα, μακροθυμίαν
Endhýsasthe oun, os eklektì tou Theòu àyeei kai eegapeemèni, splànchna iktirmù, chreestòteeta, tapinophrosýneen, praòteeta, makrothymìan

So as chosen, dedicated, beloved people of God, be clothed with visceral compassion, integrity, modesty, gentleness and great patience.

Colossians/Κολοσσαίαις 3.12

A reflection on Colossian 3.12 ‘We sometimes mistakenly believe that positive qualities in us are to be worked up from our own wells; but Paul here invites us as beloved, chosen people of God to clothe ourselves from God’s own wardrobe, since He is the One whose very fabric is favour, compassion, integrity, long patience, in fact, all the things which Paul calls the believer to demonstrate in their character. The key to looking like Jesus is to let Him weave by His Spirit in us His new life from the inside out, so that we end up wearing His own clothing brand!’

October 8 2017 Day 281 Readings Jeremiah 10:1-11:23, Colossians 3:18-4:18, Psalm 78:56-72, Proverbs 24:28-29

כתמר מקשה המה ולא ידברו נשוא ינשוא כי לא יצעדו אל-תיראו מהם כי-לא ירעו וגם-
היטיב אין אותם

Ke-tòmer miqshah hèmah, ve-lò yedabbèru. Nasò yinnasù, ki lo yitzadù. Al-tir’ù me-hèm, ki lo yarè’u ve-gàm heytèybh eyn otàm

(Of the non-god idols) Like a palm-trunk, they stand straight, but they can’t speak. In fact, they have to be lugged about, because they can’t move. Don’t be in awe of them, for they can neither harm nor give benefit.

Jeremiah 10v5/ ירמיהו י"ה

A reflection on Jeremiah 10.5 ‘The contrast between the non-god idols of the pagans and the living God, Maker of heaven and earth is stark. The non-gods are creations of man; they have to be lugged about, and do not move themselves. The Lord of all is unseen, moving where He will, beyond the control of man. He alone is the One of whom we should be in awe.’

Τῆ προσευχῆ προσκατερεῖτε, γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ
Tee prosevchèe proskarterèete, greegoròundes en avtèe en evcharistia
Keep applying yourselves to prayer, being vigilant in it, with thankfulness.
Colossians/Κολοσσαίαις 4.2

A reflection on Colossians 4.2 ‘Paul echoes here the words of Acts 2.42, when the first assembly of believers after Pentecost made prayer one of their priorities, along with fellowship and study of the Apostles’ teaching. Paul uses the same word ‘apply yourselves’, a word which has a sense of ‘getting stuck into’, as is in the Acts verse. Prayer is our interface with heaven, our means of seeking and receiving direction and insight from the throneroom of God, as key as ground control is to a plane’s progress through the skies. As we give thanks, we report our progress in the Spirit, then we feed back what is in our path which the Lord needs to attend to and guide us through. Without prayer, we are flying into danger.’

October 9 2017 Day 282 Readings Jeremiah 12:1-14:10, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2:8, Psalm 79:1-13, Proverbs 24:30-34

תנו ליהוה אלהיכם כבוד בטרם יחשך ובטרם יתנגפו רגליכם על הרי נשף וקויתם לאור
ושמה לצלמות ושית לערפל

Tenu l’Adonai Elohèykhem kabhòd, be-tèrem yachshìkh u-bhe-tèrem yitnagephù raglèykhem al-harèy nàsheph; ve-kivvitem le-òr, ve-samàh le-tzalmàvet ve-shìt la-araphèl.

Take the LORD your God seriously, before He makes everything dark and before your feet trip up on the hills at twilight; you behave as though light is here, but He will turn it into deathly dark and bring down deep gloom.

Jeremiah 13v15/טו יג" ירמיהו

A reflection on Jeremiah 13.15 ‘Jeremiah’s appeal to give the Lord glory is an appeal to take Him seriously; the outcome of acting as though He is not there will be to live in an oppressive twilight world of uncertainty and gloom. To pretend there is light when there is none is a deep darkness indeed.’

ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ
καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ καὶ ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ,
καθὼς οἴδατε οἳοι ἐγενήθημεν ἐν ὑμῖν δι’ ὑμᾶς.

Òti to evangèlion eemòn ouk eyenèethee ees ymàs en lògo mònon, allà kai en dhynàmi kai en Pnèvmati Ayì-o kai en pleerophoria pollèe, kathòs ìdhate èe-i eyenèetheemen en ymìn dhi ymàs.

For our good news came to you not just in word, but also in power and by the Holy Spirit, as well as with great confidence, qualities you know by our having been with you and for you.

1 Thessalonians/Θεσσαλονικεις A 1.5

A reflection on 1 Thessalonians 1.5 ‘Paul reminds his readers in Thessaloniki that the good news they received was not just a rational appeal to the mind, but a demonstration of the powerful presence of God Himself through the Holy Spirit, with bold confidence for their blessing and rebirth. It’s a reminder to us that we need to pray for the signs and actions of the Holy Spirit to drench our sharing of His good news today, so that hearts are captured by Him, not just informed but transformed by an encounter with the living God which reveals Him powerfully as the slain and risen King of the universe.’

October 10 2017 Day 283 Readings Jeremiah 14:11-16:15, 1 Thessalonians 2:9-3:13, Psalm 80:1-19, Proverbs 25:1-5

הֲיֵשׁ בְּהַבְלֵי הַגּוֹיִם מַגְשִׁימִים וְאִם-הַשָּׁמַיִם יִתְּנוּ רֶבִיבִים הֲלֹא אַתָּה-הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִקְוָה-
לָךְ--כִּי-אַתָּה עֹשֵׂית אֶת-כָּל-אַלֶּה

Ha-yèsh be-habhlèy ha-goyìim magshimìm? Ve-ìm ha-shamàyim yitnù rebhibhìm? Ha-lò attàh hu Adonài Elohèynu? u-neqavvèh lakh ki attàh asìta et kol èleh.

Is there any of the pointless non-gods of the nations who can make it rain? Or can the skies send showers by themselves? Aren’t you the only One who can do this, Lord, our God? So we will look to You, for it’s You that does all this.

Jeremiah 14.22/רמיהו יד"כ

A reflection on Jeremiah 14.22 ‘All life depends on the supply of water, which is why it is such a powerful sign of God’s provision. Man comes up with many stories of where rain comes from, but Jeremiah sees them all as pointless in comparison with the Maker of Heaven and Earth, who alone creates and showers down rain to bless the ground. This is the God the prophet urges Israel to trust in, even though he knows that they are unlikely to listen to him.’

ὕμᾱς δὲ ὁ Κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας,
καθὰπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾱς

Ymàs dhe o Kýrios pleonàsai kai perissèvsai tee agàpee ees allèelous kai ees pàndas, kathàper kai eemèes ees ymàs.

May the Lord make your love toward each other increase and overflow to include everyone, just as we have toward you.

1 Thessalonians/Θεσσαλονικεις A 3.12

A reflection on 1 Thessalonians 3.12 'When the door is fully opened up to the self-giving 'agape' love of God, its flow increases exponentially, until our embrace becomes the embrace of God, and our heart His heart. '

October 11 2017 Day 284 Readings Jeremiah 16:16-18:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5:3, Psalm 81:1-16, Proverbs 25:6-8

מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה כָּל-עֲזָבֶיךָ יִבְשׁוּ וְסוּרֵי בְּאֵרְךָ יִכְתְּבוּ כִּי עָזְבוּ מִקְוֵה מִיָּמִים אֶת-יְהוָה
Miqveh Yisra'el Adonài; kol- ozbhèkha yebhòshu, ve-surài ba'àretz yikkatèbhù, ki azbhù meqòr màyyim-chayyim, et-Adonài

O Hope of Israel, the LORD; all who forsake You will be ashamed, and those leaving will be inscribed in the ground, for they are forsaking the source of the water of life, the LORD
Jeremiah 17v13/ג' י"רמיהו

A reflection on Jeremiah 17.13 'Jeremiah points Judah to the true source of living water and to hope in the Lord. Without Him there is no other meaning and no other wellspring of supply. Hope is found in Him alone. '

ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος ἐν κελεύσματι, ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου καὶ ἐν σάλπιγγι Θεοῦ καταβήσεται ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται πρῶτον
Òti avtòs o Kýrios en kelèvsmati, en phonèe archangèlou kai en sàlpingi Theou katabhèsetai ap ourandù, kai i nekri en Christò anastèsondai pròton.

For the Lord Himself will come down from the sky with a shout, with the voice of a chief angel and with the horn-blast of God, and the first to rise will be those of Messiah's people who have died.

1 Thessalonians/Θεσσαλονικεῖς Α 4.16

A reflection on 1 Thessalonians 4.16 'The outrageous hope of the believers in Messiah Jesus is that He is coming back, accompanied by the shout of a chief angel and the horn-blast of God, and will call the dead back to life, the first to rise being those who died trusting in Him. This is His promise, guaranteed by His own awesome resurrection from the dead and His going up to sit with His Father in glory until His return.'

October 12 2017 Day 285 Readings Jeremiah 19:1-21:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-28, Psalm 82:1-8, Proverbs 25:9-10

שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה--הַלְלוּ אֶת-יְהוָה כִּי הִצִּיל אֶת-נַפְשׁ אֲבִיוֹן מִיַּד מְרַעִים
Shìru l'Adonài, hallelù et-Adonài, ki hitzìl et-nèphesh ebhyòn mi-yàd merey'im

Sing to the LORD, celebrate the LORD, for He has rescued the life of the downtrodden from the grip of criminals

Jeremiah 20v13/ג' י"רמיהו

A reflection on Jeremiah 20.13 'Jeremiah encourages the expression of joy and celebration among the people of God over the rescue their deliverer has achieved. The Scriptures resound with constant calls for us to vocalise and declare the saving acts of the one who has redeemed us. The word Hallelu-jah (celebrate the Lord) is itself not a suggestion, but a direction. '

αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιασάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τηρηθεῖν

Avtòs de o Theòs tees eerènees ayiàsthai ymàs oloatelèes kai oloklèeron ymòn to pnèvma kai ee psychèe kai to sòma amèemptos en tee parousìa tou Kyriou eemòn Ieesòu Christòu teereethèei

So may the God of peace Himself make you totally distinctive for Him and may your whole being, spirit, soul and body be kept spotless for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thess/Θεσσαλονικεις 5.23ff

A reflection on 1 Thessalonians 5 .23ff 'The senders invoke a blessing of God to bring them peace, surrender to Him and protection. A tender greeting, including a kiss of peace for all and a request (the only first person singular instruction in the whole work, presumably from Paul) to read the letter to the church is tied off with a seal of Christ's grace.'

קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים שְׂפֹטָה הָאָרֶץ כִּי-אַתָּה תִּנְחַל בְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם

Qùmah Elohim, shophtàh ha-àretz, ki attàh tinchàl be-khòl ha-goyim.

Rise up, O God and set the earth to rights, for all the nations are your inheritance.

Psalm 82.8/ח"פב"ח

A reflection on Psalm 82.8 'At the beginning, God brought earth out of the chaos of unbeing; that chaos, through evil, is constantly seeking to break in and take over. Here the Singer calls on the Lord to come and establish His order again in the earth, since the nations are His responsibility. This is the heart of God's justice, setting what is at odds to rights again, establishing His kingship across the planet.'

October 13 2017 Day 286 Readings Jeremiah 22:1-23:20, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12, Psalm 83:1-18, Proverbs 25:11-14

הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם-יְהוָה וְהִקְמַתִּי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדִיק וּמֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ וְהִשְׁכִּיל וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בְּאֶרֶץ בְּיָמָיו תִּנְשַׁע יְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁכֵן לְבֵטַח וְזֶה-שְּׁמוֹ אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָאוּ יְהוָה צְדִקְנוּ
Hinèh yamim ba'im ne'um Adonài va-haqi'otì le-David tzèmach tzaddìq, u-malàkh mèlekh ve-hiskil ve-asàh mishpat u-tzedaqàh ba-àretz be-yamàv tivashà Yehudàh ve-Yisra'èl yishkòn la-bhètach ve-zèh shemò ashèr yiqra'ò, 'Adonài Tzidqèynu'.

Look, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will establish for David an honourable branch, a king who will reign with wisdom and will set things to rights in the land with equity, and in his times, Judah and Israel will be rescued and will live in security, and this is the name the King will be called – 'The Lord is our Integrity'.

Jeremiah 23.5,6/ רמיהו כג"ה ו

A reflection on Jeremiah 23.5,6 'Built into us as human beings is a longing for equity and justice; we react against evil when we see people being oppressed and treated badly, especially by those in power. Jeremiah is speaking here about a king, descended from David, who will come and act in wisdom and fairness, leading to safety and security in the land, a King whose name will be 'The Lord our Integrity.' This is the reign of God Jesus proclaims, when by His Spirit, the earth is being turned right-side up. There is a long way still to go, but as we say no to sharp practice and selfishness in our own lives, and yes to self-giving love, this reign of God is spreading and will culminate in the setting of all things to rights when Jesus comes again.'

October 15 2017 Day 288 Readings Jeremiah 26:1-27:22, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18, Psalm 85:1-13, Proverbs 25:16

אָךְ יַד אַחִיקָם בֶּן-שַׁפְּחָן הָיְתָה אֶת-יְרֵמְיָהוּ--לְבַלְתִּי תֵת-אֶתוֹ בְּיַד-הָעָם לְהַמִּיתוֹ
Akh yad Achiqàm ben-Shaphàn hayt`ah et-Yirmiyàhu, lebhilti tet otò bhe-yàd ha-àm lahamitò
Moreover the hand of Achikam Ben-Shaphan was with Jeremiah, without which they would have given him into the hand of the people to kill him.
Jeremiah 26v24/כד " כו " ירמיהו

A reflection on Jeremiah 26.24 ‘Jeremiah is in grave danger for delivering the word the Lord has given to him concerning the downfall of Judah; there is a debate among the leaders as to whether he should die for what is seen as treason. But through the determined efforts of one man, Achikam, Jeremiah is spared death and continues to serve the Lord. We see here man’s perennial rejection of God’s word through the suffering of His prophets; we need to be careful to have an ear both for God’s reprimands as well as for His encouragements.’

Τὸ λοιπὸν προσεύχεσθε, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου τρέχη καὶ δοξάζεται, καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς

To lipòn prosèvchesthe, adhelphì, perì eemòn, ìna o lògos tou Kyriou trèchee kai dhoxàzeetai, kathòs kai pros ymàs.

Lastly, brothers and sisters, pray for us, that the word of the Lord will run unhindered and be as glorious as it has been towards you.

2 Thessalonians/Προς Θεσσαλονικεῖς Β 3.1

A reflection on 2 Thessalonians 3.1 ‘Paul asks his brothers and sisters in Thessaloniki to pray for the same fruitfulness for the message of Jesus as they have experienced among them, as free and glorious in its outcome. There is nothing as liberating and joyful as the release of God’s presence among people hungry for His touch, and Paul wants all who can throughout the world to be transformed by Him.’

October 16 2017 Day 289 Readings Jeremiah 28:1-29:32, 1 Timothy 1:1-20, Psalm 86:1-17, Proverbs 25:17

וְדִרְשׁוּ אֶת-שְׁלוֹם הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִגְלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ בְעַדָּהּ אֶל-יְהוָה כִּי בְשְׁלוֹמָה יְהִי לְכֶם שְׁלוֹם
Ve-dirshù et-shalòm ha-èer ashèr higlèyti etkhèm shamàh, ve-hitpalelù ba-adàh el-Adonài, ki be-shlomàh yihyèh lakhèm shalòm.

Pursue the full wellbeing of the city where I have permitted your exile, and pray for her to the LORD, for in her wholeness will be your wholeness.

Jeremiah 29v7/ז"ז ירמיהו

A reflection on Jeremiah 29.7 ‘While Israel is in her captivity in Babylon, she is not to just turn in on herself and wait for repatriation. Through Jeremiah, God calls her to pray for the wellbeing of the city of her exile. God’s stated intention since His encounter with Abraham is to bless the nations through His people, and here is the opportunity for them to enter their mission through prayer and intercession.’

τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων, ἀφθάρτῳ, ἀοράτῳ, μόνῳ σοφῷ Θεῷ, τιμὴ καὶ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

To dhe bhasilì ton aìdonon, aphthàrto, aoràto, mònò sophò Theò, timèe kai dhòxa ees tous aìdnas ton aìdonon, Amèn.

So to the eternal, immortal, invisible King, the One wise God, be honour and glory for ages beyond limit. Amen.

1 Timothy/Προς Τιμοθεον Α 1.17

A reflection on 1 Timothy 1.17 'Paul has been explaining to his beloved son in Christ, Timothy, how much he needed the intervention and rescue of God's love in Jesus, having been a pursuer and destroyer of the people of Messiah, a major sinner. His exclamation here is to give all honour and glory to this immortal, invisible, eternal King forever, so amazing, so outrageous is His grace!'

October 17 2017 Day 290 Readings Jeremiah 30:1-31:26, 1 Timothy 2:1-15, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 25:18-19

מרחוק יהוה נראה לי ואהבת עולם אהבתיך על-כן משכתיך חסד
Me-rachòq Adonài nir'à li, 'Ve-ahabhàt olàm ahabhtikh, al-kèn meshakhtìkh chàsèd.'
From far off the LORD let me see Him, saying, 'With love everlasting I have loved you, therefore I have wooed you with covenant-obligated grace.'
Jeremiah 31v2/ יחזקאל לא"ב

A reflection on Jeremiah 31.2 'Even when the Lord feels far off, His covenant-bonded grace is still constant toward us. Of course, He is never far, it's just that we don't perceive Him to be near. The people of God are going into exile, a dark time in their story, yet the Lord's irrevocable loving commitment to them will not let them go, and plans for their wooing back to Himself.'

Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις,
εὐχαριστίας, ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων
Parakalò oun pròton pànton pièsthai dheèsis, prosevchàs, entèvxees, evcharistias ypèr pànton anthròpon
I ask then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people.
1 Timothy/ Τιμοθεον Α 2.1

A reflection on 1 Timothy 2.1 'Paul brings directions on prayer for those in authority, to seek God's blessing on society so that life may be lived out in order and peace. The Jewish settlement which the Romans came to under Caesar included prayer for Caesar, rather than burning incense to the emperor, which was idolatrous, and therefore Paul is asking Christians to follow this example for the good of all. God is pleased with this action, and it aids the free proclamation of the good news of Jesus, to fulfil God's heart to see all people rescued.'

וְשָׂרִים כְּחֻלִּים כָּל-מַעֲיָנֵי בְךָ
Ve-sharìm ke-cholelim, 'Kol ma'ayanài bakh.'
As the pipers play, so the singers sing 'In You are all my sources!'
Psalm 87.7/ז"ז תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 87.7 'Joy over God and expression in music go hand-in-hand; at the end of this Song of celebration about the gathering from the nations to Jerusalem, the Singer gives us in a few words the picture of vocalists and players together lifting up the Lord as the source of everything of worth to them. Who can keep from singing over the spring from which we are birthed?'

October 18 2017 Day 291 Readings Jeremiah 31:27-32:44, 1 Timothy 3:1-16, Psalm 88:1-18, Proverbs 25:20-22

וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּעוּ אֶת-יְהוָה כִּי-כֹלֵם יִדְעוּ אוֹתִי
לְמִקְטָנָם וְעַד-גְּדוֹלָם נֵאֵם-יְהוָה כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹנְוֵם וּלְחַטָּאתָם לֹא אֶזְכֹּר-עוֹד
'Ve-lò yelamdù od ish et-re'èhu ve-ish et-achiv, lemòr, 'De-ù et Adonài', ki kulàm yede'ù oti
le-miqtanàm ve-àd gedolàm', ne'ùm Adonài, 'ki eslàch la'avonàm, ulechata'àm lo ezkàr od.'
'And no one will have to teach their neighbour or their brother any more, saying, 'Know the
LORD' because everyone will know Me, from the least to the greatest', says the LORD, 'and
I will pardon their failures and their sins I will remember no more.'
Jeremiah 31v33/ ירמיהו לא"לג

A reflection on Jeremiah 31.33 'God's promise through Jeremiah of a renewed covenant with Israel is explicit in its intention that every person should know God. The word 'know' in Hebrew is not about intellectual grasp or logic, but about experience and encounter. The promise is that everyone would experience the Lord's forgiving love in their lives, transforming them. We also need that same experience and encounter, daily.'

אָהָה אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה הִנֵּה אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ בְּכַחַךְ הַגָּדוֹל וּבְזַרְעֶךָ
הַנְּטוּיָה לֹא-יִפְּלֵא מִמֶּךָ כָּל-דָּבָר
Ahà, adonài Adonài, hinèh atàh asità et-ha-shamàyim ve-et-ha-àretz be-khoachà ha-gadòl u-
bhi-zroakhà, ha-netuyàh; lo yippalèy mimkhà kol-dabhàr!
Wow, O LORD, my Lord, - look, You have made the skies and the earth by Your great
power, by reaching out Your own arm; nothing is too difficult for You!
Jeremiah 32v17/ ירמיהו לב"ז

A reflection on Jeremiah 32.17 'This is literally Jeremiah's 'Aha' moment! as, in the Hebrew, he exclaims 'Aha, Adonai!', as he looks around at the mind-blowing scope of God's power in creation, and sees that nothing is too difficult for God, even the bringing back of His people out of captivity in Babylon, which they are about to enter.'

καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον· ὅς ἐφανερώθη ἐν
σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν Πνεύματι, ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη
ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ.

Kai omologoumènos mèga estì to tees evsebhèeas mystèerion; os ephaneròthee en sarkì,
edhikaiòthee en Pnèvmati, òphthee angèlis, ekeerýchthee en èthnesin, epistèvthee en kòsmo,
anelèmphthee en dhòxee.

And the greatness of this devotion is undeniably beyond explanation; He was revealed in the
flesh, justified in the Spirit, visible to angels, proclaimed among the nations, trusted in the
world, received up in glory.

1 Timothy/ Τιμοθεον Α 3.16

A reflection on 1 Timothy 3.16 'There is general acceptance among scholars that the word 'God' does not appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts of this verse, being added by an enthusiastic hand later. However, the scope of Paul's wonder still leaves us breathless at the impact of what God has done in Jesus, come in the flesh, righteous in Spirit, proclaimed beyond the Jews to the nations, visible to angels and taken up in glory. We may not be able to prove His divinity from this verse alone, but His unique place in God's plan is absolutely clear and undeniably 'mega', to use Paul's word!'

October 19 2017 Day 292 Readings Jeremiah 33:1-34:22, 1 Timothy 4:1-16, Psalm 89:1-13, Proverbs 25:23-24

וּתְשִׁבוּ אִתְּם הַיּוֹם וּתַעֲשׂוּ אֶת-הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינַי לְקָרָא דְרוֹר אִישׁ לְרַעְהוּ וּתְכַרְתּוּ בְרִית לְפָנַי
וּתְשִׁבוּ וּתְחַלְלוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי וּתְשִׁבוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַבְדּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶת-בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלָיו
שִׁפְחָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-שַׁלַּחְתֶּם חֲפָשִׁים לְנַפְשָׁם וּתְכַבְּשׁוּ אִתְּם לִהְיוֹת לְכֶם לְעַבְדִּים וּלְשִׁפְחֹת
Va-tashùbhu atèm ha-yòm, va-ta'asù et-ha-yashàr be-eynèy liqrò deròr ish le-re'èhu, va-
tikhretù bherìt le-phanày ba-bàyt ashèr niqrà shemì; ve-tashùbhu ve-tachalelù et-shemì va-
tashùbhu ish et-abhdò ve-ìsh et-shiphchatò ashèr shilàchtem chopshìm, va-tikhbeshù alàyv
otàm lihyòt lakhèm la-abhadìm ve-li-shephachòt.

And you had repented on that day, doing what was the right thing in my sight by each one declaring his fellow-Jew free, in keeping with the covenant made before me in the house that bears My Name; but then you reneged and defiled My Name by each one taking back into bondage his male and female slave which you had just delighted by letting them go, forcing them back into being your manslaves and woman-slaves.

Jeremiah 34v15,16/ ירמיהו לד"ט טז

A reflection on Jeremiah 34.15,16 'How quickly man reverts to his sub-moral behaviour when he thinks God has His back turned! Jeremiah's words highlight the reneging of Israel's wealthy slavetraders on their agreement to set free fellow Israelites who were enslaved by them in their penury. They have gone back on their word, and the Lord is insensed at their betrayal of their brothers and sisters.'

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα, ὅτι ἠλπικαμεν ἐπὶ Θεῷ ζῶντι, ὃς
ἐστὶ σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, μάλιστα πιστῶν.

Ees tòuto gar kai kopiòmen kai agonizòmetha, òti eelpikamen epì Theò, os esti-sotèer pàndon anthròpon, màlista pistòn.

For this is what we work hard and struggle for, because we have put our confidence in God, the rescuer of all mankind, especially of those who believe.

1 Timothy/ Τιμοθεον Α 4.10

A reflection on 1 Timothy 4.10 'Paul and his team give themselves willingly in the struggle to make Jesus known, against the odds, because they know that God has provided in Him for the rescue from chaos of every human being on the planet throughout time; this reality has already been realised by those who have trusted Him, but there are many still to know the freedom which the good news brings.'

October 20 2017 Day 293 Readings Jeremiah 35:1-36:32, 1 Timothy 5:1-25, Psalm 89:14-37, Proverbs 25:25-27

הוֹקֵם אֶת-דִּבְרֵי יְהוֹנָדָב בֶּן-רֵכָב אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה אֶת-בְּנָיו לְבַלְתִּי שְׁתוֹת-יַיִן וְלֹא שְׁתוּ עַד-
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי שָׁמְעוּ אֶת מִצְוֹת אֲבֵיהֶם וְאַנְכִי דִבַּרְתִּי אֲלֵיכֶם הַשָּׁכֶם וְדַבַּר וְלֹא
שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֵלָי

Huqàm et-dibhrèy Yehonadàbh ben-Rechàbh, ashèr tzivvàh et-banàyv le-bhiltì shetòt yàyin
ve-lò shatù ad ha-yòm ha-zèh, ki sham'ù et-mitzvàt abhìhem, va-anokhì dibbàrti aleykhèm
hashkèym ve-dabbèr, ve-lò shemà'tem eylài

(The Lord's reproof through Jeremiah)

Fulfilled are the words of Jonadab, son of Rechab, who directed his sons not to drink wine, so they have not drunk any right up to today, because they listened to the directive of their father; yet I have spoken to you, starting early to speak, but you have not listened to me.

Jeremiah 35v14/ ירמיהו לה"ד

A reflection on Jeremiah 35.14 ‘In the Hebrew language, listening and obeying are the same thing. To obey is to put into action what has been heard. The family of Rechab have listened and have been faithful to their father’s injunction to abstain from alcohol and this is noted by the Lord through the prophet. If only Judah had shown the same faithful, listening attitude to the Lord, their outcome would have been very different. ‘Following Jesus,’ said one wise man, ‘ is long obedience in the same direction.’

εἰ δέ τις τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα τῶν οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ, τὴν πίστιν ἤρνηται καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χείρων.

Ee dhe tis ton idhìon kai màlista ton ikèeon ou pronoèe, teen pìstin èrneetai kai èstin apìstou chèeron.

So if anyone doesn’t look after his relatives, and in particular those under his own roof, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy/ Τιμοθεον Α 5.8

A reflection on 1 Timothy 5.8 ‘Paul is always intensely practical in his letters and here, in days before social security and state aid, he is concerned for widows, for whom God has a special place in His heart. In Paul’s day, a widow was one of the most vulnerable people in society, having lost her means of support; Paul requires that before she looks for relief from the community, her remaining family should care for her and take her in. If they don’t do this, how can they demonstrate credibly the self-giving love of the Saviour they claim to follow? Faith in Jesus touches the very basic elements of our day-to-day life.’

צְדָק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוֹן כְּסֵאֶךָ חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת יִקְדָּמוּ פָנֶיךָ

Tzèdeq u-mishpàt mekhòn kis-èkha; chèsed ve-èmet yeqàdmu panèkha

Integrity and equity are the base of Your throne; covenant-bonded grace and dependable truth herald Your presence-face.

Psalms 89v14/ תהילים פט"טו

A reflection on Psalm 89.14: ‘Justice and straight-dealing are foundational to God’s kingship, and ‘*hesed and emet*’, (covenant –bonded grace and dependable truth) herald the presence of the Lord as He comes. The Holy Spirit reminds us, through Ethan the Ezrahite’s song of covenant, that God’s action is always based upon His unchanging character and utter dependability. ’

October 21 2017 Day 294 Readings Jeremiah 37:1-38:28, 1 Timothy 6:1-21, Psalm 89:38-52, Proverbs 25:28

וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-יִרְמְיָהוּ וַיִּשְׁלְכוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל-הַבּוֹר מֶלֶךְ-יְהוָה בֶּן-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲצַר הַמַּטָּרָה וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת-יִרְמְיָהוּ בַּחֲבָלִים וּבַבּוֹר אֵין-מַיִם כִּי אִם-טֵיט וַיִּטְבַּע יִרְמְיָהוּ בַטֵּיט

Va-yìqechu et-Yirmeyàhu, va-yashlìkhu otò el-habòr Malkiyàhu bhen-hamèlekh, ashèr ba-chatzàr ha-mattaràh, va-yishlechù et-Yirmeyàhu be-chavalìm, u-vabòr eyn-mayìm, ki im tit; va-yitbà Yirmeyàhu ba-tìt

And they took Jeremiah, and chucked him into the reservoir-pit of Malkiyah, son of the King, which was in the courtyard of the guard-house, lowering Jeremiah with ropes into the reservoir-pit, with no water in it, just mud; and Jeremiah was sinking into the mud.

Jeremiah 38v6/ ירמיהו לח"ו

A reflection on Jeremiah 38.6 'As Jeremiah is lowered into a literal slimy pit, he must have had the words of the Psalmist in mind, 'From the depths I cried to you' (Psalm 130). God allows His servant to suffer, to go through rank ignominy at the hands of evil men; yet God's eye is never turned away, and at the right moment, God lifts him up out of the mire. (Psalm 40.2) Whatever our journey, God walks there with us.'

ἔστι δὲ πορισμὸς μέγας ἢ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας.

Èsti dhe porismòs mègas ee evsèbheia metà avtakrìas.

So there is great advantage in being devoted to God and satisfied with what we have.

1 Timothy/ Τιμοθεον A 6.6

A reflection on 1 Timothy 6.6 'Paul is directing Timothy here not to get tied up in the hunger for material wealth, since it does not bring peace. It is well to note that wanting more is an addiction, while being satisfied with what we have, however modest, and in relationship with the One who loves and cares for us is true contentment.'

October 22 2017 Day 295 Readings Jeremiah 39:1-41:18, 2 Timothy 1:1-18, Psalm 90:1-91:16, Proverbs 26:1-2

וַיִּשְׁלַח נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן רַב-טַבָּחִים וְנְבוּשַׁזְבָּן רַב-סָרִיס וְנִרְגַל שְׂרָאֲצָר רַב-מַג--וְכָל רַבֵּי מְלָךְ-בָּבֶל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-יִרְמְיָהוּ מִחֶצֶר הַמַּטְרָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל-גְּדַלְיָהוּ בֶן-אַחִיקָם בֶּן-שָׁפָן לְהוֹצִיאֵהוּ אֶל-הַבַּיִת וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם

Va-yishlâch Nebhuzaradân, rabh-tabachîm, u-Nebhushazbân, Rabh-sâris ve-Nergâl-Sharêtzetzer rabh mag kol rabbèy mèlekh Babhèl va-yishlechù va-yiqechù et Yirmiyahù mey-chatzâr hamataràh, va-yitenù otò el Gedalyàhu ben Achikàm, ben Shaphàn, le-hotzi'èyhu el ha-bàyit va-yeshèbh be-tòkh ha-àm.

So Nebuzaradan, the executive chief, and Nebushazban, Rab-saris and Nergal-Sharezer, the main officials with all the other officers of the King of Babylon ordered Jeremiah to be taken from the precincts of the prison-house and given to (governor) Gedaliah ben-Achikam-ben-Shaphan, to let him go home; so he went to live among the people.

Jeremiah 39.13,14/ יד"ג יד"ג יד"ג

A reflection on Jeremiah 39.13,14 'There is a terrible irony in the story of Jeremiah and the downfall of Jerusalem, which he has prophesied. While the royal heirs of Zedekiah are slain, and the King himself is blinded and deported, the very foreign forces which take the city become Jeremiah's liberators, freeing him from the prison where Zedekiah has held him and committing him to the newly-appointed, Babylonian-approved governor, Gedaliah, for release and return home. While the storm rages around him, Jeremiah is vindicated, for now at least, in his speaking out the words of warning he has faithfully declared and for which he has suffered so much from the political and religious establishment.'

יֵשֶׁב בְּסֵתֶר עֲלִיּוֹן בְּצֶל שְׁדֵי יִתְלוֹנָן אֲמַר לַיהוָה מַחְסֵי וּמְצוּדָתִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְטַח-בוּ
Yoshèbh be-sèter Elyòn, be-tsèl Shaddài yitlonàn; omàr l'Adonài 'machsì u-metsudatì, Elohài', èbhtach-bo.

The one dwelling under cover of the Supreme God, in the shadow of the Most High shall reside; I will say to the LORD, 'my shelter, my stronghold, my God', I rely on Him.

Psalm 91v1/ א"א תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 91.1 'There is no shame in hiding in God when storms roar around us. The singer of this psalm witnesses to not just sheltering under His cover, but residing there. God's presence is his permanent address. Only in the protection of His unending covenanted grace will we find refuge from the struggle and pain mortal life brings.'

October 23 2017 Day 296 Readings Jeremiah 42:1-44:23, 2 Timothy 2:1-21, Psalm 92:1-93.5, Proverbs 26:3-5

וַיֹּאמֶר עֲזַרְיָה בֶן-הוֹשָׁעִיָּה וַיֹּחָנָן בֶּן-קִרְיָח וְכָל-הָאֲנָשִׁים הַזֵּדִים אֲמָרִים אֶל-יְרֵמְיָהוּ שֹׁקֵר
אֶתָּה מְדַבֵּר לֹא שְׁלַחָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֵאמֹר לֹא-תָבֹאוּ מִצְרַיִם לְגֹר שָׁמָּה
Va-yòmer Azaryàh bhen-Hosha'yàh, ve-Yochanàn ben Qorèach ve-khol ha-anashìm ha-
zeydìm, omerìm el-Yirmeyàhu, 'Shèqer atàh medabbèr; lo shelachekhà Adonài Elohèynu
leymòr, 'Lo tabhò'u Mitzràyim lagùr sham.' '
And Azariah son of Hoshayah, and Yochanan son of Qoreach and all these arrogant men
were saying to Jeremiah, 'It's all lies you are speaking; the LORD our God hasn't sent you to
say, 'Don't go to Egypt and stay there.' '
Jeremiah 43v2/ ירמיהו מג"ב

A reflection on Jeremiah 43.2 'How hard it must have been for Jeremiah to be denounced by the influential prophets around him who were countermanning his counsel not to go to Egypt. How faithful of Jeremiah to stick with what he knew God was saying, rather than change his vision to suit the naysayers. Saying yes to God may well lead us to say no to those around us.'

σπούδασον σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ Θεῷ, ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον,
ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας.

Spoudhason seavtòn dhòkimon parastèesai to Theò, ergàteen anepàischyndon,
orthotomòunda ton lògon tees alètheias.

Endeavour to certify yourself as one approved by God, an unashamed worker, precise and incisive with the whole body of truth.

2 Timothy/ Τιμοθεον B 2.15

A reflection on 2 Timothy 2.15 'Paul encourages Timothy to apply himself to the careful dissection of the body of God's truth, so that he can demonstrate the approval from God which he has. This is not about earning God's favour, but working it out in ways which show God's life at work in the leader, particularly in the way the Holy Spirit guides the hand, like the hand of a surgeon, to carefully reach the heart of the matter and convey it to the other disciples.'

October 24 2017 Day 297 Readings Jeremiah 44:24-47:7, 2 Timothy 2:22-3:17, Psalm 94:1-23, Proverbs 26:6-8

וַאֲתָה תְּבַקֵּשׁ-לְךָ גְּדֹלוֹת אֶל-תְּבַקֵּשׁ כִּי הִנְנִי מְבִיא רָעָה עַל-כָּל-בָּשָׂר נְאֻם-יְהוָה וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ
אֶת-נִפְשֶׁךָ לְשַׁלַּל עַל כָּל-הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ-שָׁמָּה

Ve-attàh, tebhaqèsh lekhà gedolòt? Al tebhaqèsh, ki hinenì, mebhì ra'àh al-kol-basàr, ne-ùm
Adonài, ve-natati le-khà et-naphshì le-shalàl al kol ha-meqomòt ashèr tèlekh sham.

(The Lord speaks a sobering word to Jeremiah's scribe, Barukh)

And you, are you looking for great outcomes? Don't bother, for look, I am about to bring a terrible thing on all flesh, says the LORD, but I will give you your life as a reward, wherever you go to.

Jeremiah 45v5/ ירמיהו מה"ה

A reflection on Jeremiah 45.5 'We must not pretend that this journey with God is a yellow-brick road filled with singing birds and rainbows. The walk of many in God is filled with pain and trauma. To Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, God promises only that his life will be preserved as a gift for him in the midst of terrible destruction. Sometimes, all we can hold on to is life itself.'

וְאַתָּה אֶל-תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב וְאֶל-תַּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי הִנְנִי מוֹשֶׁעֶךָ מִרְחֹק וְאֶת-זֶרְעֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ
שָׁבִים וְשָׁב יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁקֵט וְשָׁאֲנָן וְאִין מִחֲרִיד

Ve-atàh, al-tirài, abhdì Ya'aqòbh, ve-àl tèchat, Yisra'èl, ki hinenì, moshì'akha mirachòq ve-et-zerakhà mey-èretz shibh-yàm ve-shàbh Ya'aqòbh ve-shaqàt ve-sha'anàn ve-èyn macharìd

And you, don't be afraid, my servant Jacob, and don't be shaken, Israel, for here I am, your rescuer from a distant place and of your children from the land of their captivity and Jacob will come back and find rest and security with none to terrorise them

Jeremiah 46v27/ ירמיהו מו"כז

A reflection on Jeremiah 46.27 'Not for the first time is the Lord promising to deliver and repatriate His people from their oppressors. He set them free from slavery under Pharaoh, and now again, from that distant captivity in Babylon, the Lord's promise is to set them free and restore them to the land from which they have been ejected, but which they will settle again with security . '

πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ

Pàsa graphèe Theòpnevstos kai ophèlimos pros dhidhaskalian, pros elegmòn, pros epanòrthosin, pros paidhèian teen en dhikaiosýnee.

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for correcting what's offbeam, for putting straight, for training in integrity.

2 Timothy/Τιμοθεου Β 3.16

A reflection on 2 Timothy 3.16 'Timothy is to stay rooted in the Scriptures, which point the way to rescue and transformation, and are breathed by God (Greek 'theó-pnevstos'); they are full of useful tools for correcting, instructing and directing people into God.'

בְּרֵב שְׂרָעֵפִי בְּקִרְבִּי תִנְחֹמֶיךָ יְשַׁעֲשְׁעוּ נַפְשִׁי

Be-ròbh sar'apài be-qirbì, tanchumèkha yesha'ash'ù naphshi.

In the midst of my many inner thoughts, Your comfort brings delight to my soul.

Psalms 94.19/ט"ט צד"י

A reflection on Psalm 94.19 'When our thoughts tumble over one another as we try and make sense of tough situations, let's turn to the Lord and listen to His words of comfort and encouragement, finding our delight in Him in the midst of turmoil.'

October 25 2017 Day 298 Readings Jeremiah 48:1-49:22, 2 Timothy 4:1-22, Psalm 95:1-96:13, Proverbs 26:9-12

שָׁאֲנָן מוֹאָב מִנְעוּרָיו וְשָׁקֵט הוּא אֶל-שְׁמֵרָיו וְלֹא-הוֹרֵק מִכְּלֵי אֶל-כְּלֵי וּבִגְלוֹהָ לֹא הִלָּךְ עַל-
כֵּן עָמַד טַעְמוֹ בּוֹ וְרִיחוֹ לֹא נָמַר

Sha'anàn Mo'àbh mi-ne'uràyv, ve-shoqèt hu el-shemaràyv ve-lò huràq mi-kelì el-kelì, u-bhagolàh lo halàkh, al-kèn amàd ta'mò bo ve-reychò lo namàr.

Moab has lazed about since its childhood, and has wallowed in his dregs and not been decanted from bottle to bottle, and has not been exiled, so his flavour has stayed the same and his bouquet has not altered.

Jeremiah 48v11/ ירמיהו מח"יא

A reflection on Jeremiah 48.11 ‘Jeremiah contrasts the nation of Israel here with their neighbours, Moab. While Israel has been stretched, purified and refined by its terrible ordeal in exile in Babylon, Moab has had a relatively easy time, lolling about in its laid-back status quo. As a result, like a wine that has not been decanted into new containers, they are stagnating into something less than pleasant to the taste. It is worth remembering that our trials and testings are taken by God and used to shape and form us into something more beautiful, if we keep yielded to Him in the process.’

κήρυξον τὸν λόγον, ἐπίστηθι εὐκαίρως ἀκαίρως, ἔλεγχον, ἐπιτίμησον,
παρακάλεσον, ἐν πάσῃ μακροθυμία καὶ διδαχῇ.

Kèeryxon ton lògon, epìsteethi evkàiros akàiros, èlenxon epitimeeson, parakàleson, en pàsee makrothymìa kai dhidhachèe.

Declaring the word, ready for special occasions and for no occasion, correcting, preventing and encouraging with long-term, patient instruction.

2 Timothy/Τιμοθεον Β 4.1

A reflection on 2 Timothy 4.1 ‘Paul, having commended to Timothy the Scriptures as the mine of the treasure of God, now also charges him to be ready always to share what he has in store, whether for special occasions or for everyday moments, to direct, correct or encourage his listeners, over the long haul, patiently teaching them God’s word. This is the privilege of those anointed by the Spirit to break open the fruit of the story of God, to impart its rich contents to His beloved.’

October 26 2017 Day 299 Readings Jeremiah 49:23-50:46, Titus 1:1-16, Psalm 97:1-98:9, Proverbs 26:13-16

גַּאֲלָם חִזַּק יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ רִיב יָרִיב אֶת-רִיבָם לְמַעַן הַרְגִיעַ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְהִרְגִיז לִישָׁבֶיהָ

Go'alàm chazàq, Adonài tzebha'òt shemò; ribh yaribh et-ribhàm, le-ma'an hirgi'a et-ha-àretz ve-hirgìz le-yoshebhèy Babhèl.

Their Redeemer is powerful, the LORD of armies is His name; He will most certainly fight their case for them, in order to calm the land and to unnerve the population of Babylon.

Jeremiah 50.34/ ירמיהו נ"ד

A reflection on Jeremiah 50.34 ‘When the Lord made His covenant with Abraham to bless the nations through his descendants, the sons of Israel, history was decided for all time to come; whatever else happens, He defends their destiny as the people of His calling, for through them has come Messiah Jesus and the salvation of the world.’

δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι ὡς Θεοῦ οἰκονόμον, μὴ αὐθάδη, μὴ ὀργίλον, μὴ πάροινον, μὴ πλήκτην, μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ

Dhee gar ton epìskopon anènkleeton ènai os Theou ikonòmon, mee avthàdhee, mee orgìlon, mee pàrìnon, mee plèekteen, mee aischrokerdhèe.

For, as God’s steward, the one in oversight must be above reproach, unselfish, not bad-tempered, not dependent on alcohol, not violent and not in it for the money.

Titus /Προς Τιτον 1.7

A reflection on Titus 1.7 ‘Paul has already described himself and Apollos in 1 Corinthians 4.1 as ‘stewards (econòmi) of the mysteries of God’; here, in advising Titus on the setting in place of leaders for the community of Jesus’ disciples on the island of Crete, Paul uses the term ‘econòmos’ again. Leadership among the people of Jesus is always stewarding, never lording; service first of Jesus and the priority of His Kingdom, then service of people He loves, both within and outwith the assembly of the faithful. Good overseers will always remember that they are only ever ‘loss leaders’, at best unprofitable servants, (Luke 17.10) who can never repay the Master by their service, but always remain redeemed, beloved children yielded to His call.

October 27 2017 Day 300 Readings Jeremiah 51:1-53, Titus 2:1-15, Psalm 99:1-9, Proverbs 26:17

עשה ארץ בכחו מכין תבל בְּחִכְמָתוֹ וּבְתַבּוּנָתוֹ נָטָה שָׁמַיִם

Osèh èretz be-khochò, meykhìn tèybhel be-chokhmatò u-bhitbhunatò natàh shamàyim.
Maker of earth by His power, architect of the world by His wisdom and by His understanding He stretched out the skies.

Jeremiah 51.15/ ירמיהו נא"ט

A reflection on Jeremiah 51.15 ‘In the midst of Jeremiah’s word concerning the downfall of the empire of Babylon and the eventual return of Israel to her homeland, the prophet reminds us of the One who put the whole thing together in the first place, by His power, wisdom and understanding, the Architect of the universe. Whatever our circumstances, we need to keep our perspective in focus and the Lord, Maker of all, in our sights.’

Ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἀρνησάμενοι τὴν ἀσέβειαν καὶ τὰς κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι

Epephànee gar ee chàris tou Theòu ee sotèerios pasin anthròpis, paidhèvousa eemàs, ìna arneesàmeni teen asèbhian kai tas kosmikàs epithymìas sophrònòs kai dhikàios kai evsebhòs zèesomen en to nyn aiòni.

For the rescuing grace of God has appeared to all people, instructing us how to say no to ungodliness and this world-system’s mindset, so we can live wisely and with godly integrity in this present era.

Titus/Τίτον 2.11,12

A reflection on Titus 2.11,12. ‘Far from just being a papering over the cracks of our sin, or turning a blind eye to our failures, Paul writes to Titus that God’s covenanted grace which has materialised in Jesus Christ instructs and teaches us how to say no to everything which pulls us away from God’s best. After all, why we would want to get involved with anything less than living fully as those who know who and why we are, and Whose we are, being true to Him and the amazing gift of this new identity He gives us in Christ?’

October 28 2017 Day 301 Readings Jeremiah 51:54-52:34, Titus 3:1-15, Psalm 100:1-5, Proverbs 26:18-19

וְהָיָה כְּכַלְתֶּךָ לִקְרֹא אֶת-הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה תִקְשֹׁר עָלָיו אֶבֶן וְהִשְׁלַכְתּוּ אֶל-תּוֹךְ פְּרַת
Ve-hayàh ke-khalotkhà liqrò et-ha-sèpher ha-zèh, tiqshòr alàv èbhen, ve-hishlakhtù el tokh Peràt.

(Jeremiah is entrusting to Seraiah a record of God's word concerning Babylon's downfall) And let it be that when you have finished reading the book, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the River Euphrates.

ירמיהו נא"ס"ג/51.63

A reflection on Jeremiah 51.63 'Jeremiah hands to Seraiah, ('a quiet prince' who is taken into exile in Babylon with King Zedekiah), the book (probably a scroll) of his last recorded words from the Lord about the downfall of Babylon still to come. Seraiah is to read the prophecy, and then take the scroll, tie it to a rock and throw it into the middle of the River Euphrates, as a sign that Babylon, the oppressor of God's people, will one day sink, never to rise again. God's people, on the other hand, will be delivered after seventy years, and will return to their homeland, left for now in the care of a few poor vinekeepers and farmers. Babylon, like the Babel it descends from, becomes the sign of man seeking to organise his own godless republic; that enterprise cannot succeed, and Jeremiah's sign speaks beyond his own era to all empires and powers looking to build without relating to the Maker.'

ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὧν ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἔλεον ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως Πνεύματος Ἁγίου

Òte dhe ee chrestòtees kai ee philanthropìa epephànee tou sotèeros eemòn Theòu, ouk ex èrgon ton en dikaiosýnee ón epièesamen eemèes, allà katà ton avtòu èleon èsosen eemàs dhià loutròu palinghenesiàs kai anakainòseos Pnèvmatos Ayìou.

But when the goodness and love for mankind of God our Rescuer appeared, not because of our doing worthy works to justify ourselves, but because of His mercy, He saved us by the cleansing power of being born again and by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Titus/ Τίτον 3.4,5

A reflection on Titus 3.4,5 'What an incredible rescue plan God has brought to us in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit! Nothing we can do can win His favour, but we already have His love towards us which He has shown in Jesus, delivering us from a broken past, washing us with the cleansing of rebirth and making us completely new by the energy of His Holy Spirit living in us! Outrageous grace!'

October 29 2017 Day 302 Readings Lamentations 1:1-2:22, Philemon 1:1-25, Psalm 101:1-8, Proverbs 26:20

קוּמִי רְנִי בַלַּיְלָה לְרֹאשׁ אֲשֶׁמְרוֹת שְׁפָכִי כַמַּיִם לְבָרַךְ נֹכַח פְּנֵי אֲדֹנָי שְׂאֵי אֶלְיוֹ כַּפְיךָ עַל-נֶפֶשׁ עוֹלְלִיךָ הַעֲטוּפִים בְּרַעַב בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חֻצוֹת

Qùmi, ròni bha-làylah; le-ròsh ashmuròt, shiph-chì ka-màyim libbèkh nokhàch penèi Adonài; se'ì alàyv kappàyikh al-nèphesh olalàyikh, ha-atuphìm be-ra'àv, be-ròsh kol-chutzòt

Get up, sing in the night; into the small hours, pour out your heart like water in sight of the face of the LORD; lift up to Him Your hands for the life of your little ones, weakened by hunger, at the corner of every street

Lamentations 2v19/ איכה ב"יט

A reflection on Lamentations 2.19 ‘Lamentations is a song of tragedy, a mourning for the loss of Jerusalem. Yet, even in the midst of the grieving, there is hope, a song in the night, a cry for deliverance. This is what God is looking for, the hunger for His presence, the yearning for His intervention. He will come and set them free, His people. They just need to keep singing in the dark.’

παρακαλῶ σε περὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ τέκνου, ὃν ἐγέννησα ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου,
Ονήσιμον, τὸν ποτέ σοι ἄχρηστον, νυνὶ δὲ σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ εὐχρηστον
Parakalò se perì tou emòu tèknou, on eyènneesa en tis dhesmìs mou, Onèsesimon, ton potè si àchreeston, nynì dhe si kai emì èvchreeston
I’m making a request of you concerning my child, to whom I gave birth while in my chains, Onesimos, (whose name means Useful) who was once unprofitable to you, but now is very profitable to you and me both.
Philemon/Προς Φιλήμονα 1.10,11

A reflection on Philemon 1.10,11 ‘Paul, in prison in Rome, has led to Christ a runaway slave by the name of Onesimos (meaning Useful) and is sending him back to his believing owner, Philemon, with a request to free him and send him back to Rome as an aide to Paul. Paul is making a play on words, that this unprofitable servant has now become very profitable in his life. Jesus spoke about us all as unprofitable servants in Luke 17.10. However much we do, we will never repay or earn the price paid by Christ’s blood shed for us. Yet His love makes us God’s children; like Onesimos, we are precious and of great value to our Father, not for what we do, but for who we are.’

חֶסֶד-וּמִשְׁפָּט אֲשִׁירָה לְךָ יְהוָה אֲזַמְרָה

Chèsed u-mishpàt ashirah, le-khà Adonài azamèrah.
I will sing of covenant-bonded grace and justice; for You Lord, I will play
Psalm 101.1/תהילים קא"א

A reflection on Psalm 101.1 ‘Some things are worth singing and making music about; chief among them are the covenant-bonded grace of God and His purpose to set all things to rights, His justice; thus, the Singer of Israel starts off this Song with celebration of God’s fairness and faithfulness.’

בְּאֶפֶס עֵצִים תִּכְבֶּה-אֵשׁ וּבְאֵין נֶרְגָן יִשְׁתַּקֵּם מְדוֹן

Be-èphes eytzim, tikhbèh eysh, u-bhe-èyn nirgàn, yishtòq madòn.
When the wood runs out, the fire goes out; when the backbiting stops, the quarreling stops.
Proverbs 26.20/משלי כ"כ

A reflection on Proverbs 26.20 ‘Arguments need fuel to continue. When we cut off the supply of unkindness to one another, the ammunition is not available any more, and the fire of our dispute goes out.’

October 30 2017 Day 303 Readings Lamentations 3:1-66, Hebrews 1:1-14, Psalm 102:1-28, Proverbs 26:21-22

חֲסִדֵי יְהוָה כִּי לֹא-תִמְנוּ כִּי לֹא-כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו חֲדָשִׁים לְבִקְרִים רַבָּה אֲמוּנָתְךָ

Chasdèy Adonài ki lo tamnù, ki lo khalù rachamàyv; chadashim labqarim, rabàh emunatèkha
The covenant-committed grace of the LORD keeps us from extinction, for His compassion does not end, but is daily renewed; great is Your dependability.

Lamentations 3.22,23/איכה ג"כ כג

A reflection on Lamentations 3.22-23 ‘The mourner in Lamentations acknowledges that without the covenant-bonded grace of chesed shown to them by the Lord, His faithful dependability which lasts forever, they would be finished. This grace of God is continued and extended to us through the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, bringing us into the commonwealth of the covenant with Israel.’

ὁς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τε τα πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, δι’ ἑαυτοῦ καθαρισμόν ποιησάμενος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς.

Os on apàvγasma tees dhòxees kai charaktèer tees ypostàseos avtòu, phèron te ta pànda to rhèmati tees dhynàmeos avtòu, dhi eavtòu katharismòn pi-eesàmenos ton amartiòn eemòn ekàthisen en dhexià tees megalosýnees en ypseelis.

He (Jesus), being the visible radiance of God's glory and the exact visualisation of His essence, sustaining everything by the verbal expression of His power, having by His own action cleansed us from our failures, sat down at the right side of the most exalted Majesty. Hebrews/Εβραίους 1.3

A reflection on Hebrews 1.3 ‘While God spoke long ago (Greek *pálai* – from which English *palaeontology*, study of ancient remains,) through prophets, in recent times he has spoken through a Son, different in nature to them. This Son inherits all things from the Father, by the right of primogeniture, since he has been implicated also in the creation of everything, a reference to Christ’s preexistence. This son is the radiance, the effulgence, the breaking out (Greek *apávghasma* = shining out,) of the glory of God and the imprint, the diecast image (Greek *charákteer*, such as the image of the sovereign’s head on a coin,) of God’s essential substance (Greek *ypóstasis*, literally, *sub-standing*), who by His expressed word (Greek *rhéema*) carries and sustains everything, now that He has cleansed the corruption of sin and sat down at God’s majestic throne.’

שְׁקַדְתִּי וְאֶהְיֶה כְּצֹפֹר בְּוֹדֵד עַל-גַּג

Shaqàdti va-ehyèh ke-tzippòr al gag.

I lay awake; I was like a bird alone on the roof.

Psalm 102.8/תהילים קב"ח

A reflection on Psalm 102.8 ‘The Singer finds himself in a very human place, lying awake feeling alone, like a single sparrow exposed on a roof to the elements. But he takes encouragement from the fact that God knows where he is and that His covenant-bonded grace never fails. Even in those moments of isolation, we can pull on the faithfulness of God.’

October 31 2017 Day 304 Lamentations 4:1-5:22, Hebrews 2:1-18, Psalm 103:1-22, Proverbs 26:23

הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוֹבָה הַיּוֹם כְּקִדְמָה

Hashibhèynu Adonài elèkha ve-nashùbhah, chadèsh yamèynu ke-qèdem.

Return us, Lord , to Yourself and we will be restored, make our days anew, like they used to be.

Lamentations 5.21/איכה ה"כא

A reflection on Lamentations 5.21 ‘This prayer, sung plaintively at the end of the record of disaster which has come upon the broken people of God in their deportation and occupation, at last calls for God’s restoration and renewal of them. Until we come to an end of our trying to make life work for us, and call on the Lord for His offered rescue, we will never experience hope or meaning as He intends for us.’

ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ παῖδια κεκοινώνηκε σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος, καὶ αὐτὸς παραπλησίως μετέσχε τῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα διὰ τοῦ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου, τοῦτ’ ἔστι τὸν διάβολον, καὶ ἀπαλλάξῃ τούτους, ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας.

Epèe oun paidhia kekinòneeke sarkòs kai àimatos, kai avtòs parapleesios metèsche ton avtòn, ìna dhià tou thanàtou kataryèesee ton to kràtos èchonda tou thanàtou, tout’ èsti ton diàbholon, kai apallàxee tòutous, òsi phòbho thanàtou dhià pandòs tou zeen ènochi èesan dhoulèias.

In the same way the children have in common their flesh and blood, so He Himself in the same way participated in that, so that by means of death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, thus rescuing those who all their lives were under the thumb of its slavery.

Hebrews/Εβραϊους 2.14, 15

A reflection on Hebrews 2.14 ‘By taking on our humanity from the moment of conception, and ending as we do, going into the grave, Jesus has proved that He is one of us, so that as He bursts out of that grave in resurrection, He demonstrates that the lies of satan about God wanting our destruction are baseless. Jesus has broken the hold of the fear of death over us; He is our hope and our forever future!’

November 1 2017 Day 305 Ezekiel 1:1-3:15, Hebrews 3:1-19, Psalm 104:1-23, Proverbs 26:24-26

כְּמַרְאֵה הַקֶּשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בְּעָנָן בְּיוֹם הַגֶּשֶׁם כֵּן מַרְאֵה הַנִּגְהָ סָבִיב הוּא מַרְאֵה דְּמוּת
כְּבוֹד-יְהוָה וְאֲרָאָה וְאָפֵל עַל-פָּנַי וְאָשְׁמַע קוֹל מְדַבֵּר

Ke-mar-èh ha-qèshet ashèr yihyèh be-anàn be-yòm ha-gèshem, ken mar-èh ha-nogàh sabhìbh hu, mar-èh demùt kebhòd Adonài, ve-erèh va-epòl al-panài va-eshmà qol medabèr

Like the sight of the rainbow that will be in the clouds on a day of rain, so was the sight of the splendour around Him, the sight of the reflection of the glory of the LORD, and I saw it and fell on my face when I heard a voice speaking

Ezekiel 1v28/ זט חכ"א ל

A reflection on Ezekiel 1.28 ‘Ezekiel struggles to capture in human words the splendour of the vision he sees revealed to him of God’s natural environment in the heavenly dimension. He can only render a pale likeness, using pictorial language of wheels within wheels and rainbows and reflections. In total awe, he physically falls on his face as he hears the Lord speaking to Him, such is his wonder at God’s person.’

Ὁθεν, ἀδελφοὶ ἅγιοι, κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι, κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν

Òthen, adhelphì àyiee, klèseos epouraniou mètochi, katanoèesate ton apòstolon kai archi-erèa tees omoloyias eemòn, Christòn Yeèsdun

So then, holy brothers and sisters, incuded in the calling of heaven, consider fully the emissary and the high priest we confess, the Messiah, Jesus.

Hebrews/Εβραϊους 3.1

A reflection on Hebrews 3.1 ‘The writer here ascribes to Jesus two key roles; first, He is the emissary of God, the One who above all others carries to us the mission to reveal the Father’s heart. Whatever an apostle is or does, they will look like Jesus in His commission to the world to bring many children into the Father’s house. Secondly, Jesus is the High Priest, the one who carries His people before the face of God. Jesus has entered His Father’s presence, the signs of His sacrifice still in His hands, feet and side, and remains there as a living intercession for all who confess Him as Lord.’

בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשֵׁי אֶת-יְהוָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֹלַת מְאֹד הוֹד וְהִדָּר לְבִשְׁתַּת עֹטָה-אוֹר כְּשִׁלְמָה נוֹטָה
שָׁמַיִם כִּירִיעָה

Barkhì naphshì et-Adonài; Adonài Elohay gadàlta mé’òd, hod ve-hadàr labhàshta, otèh or ka-shalmàh, notèh shamàyim ka-yerì’ah.

Let all my being bless the Lord; O Lord my God, you have become so great, arrayed in splendour and beauty, wearing light for a garment, spreading out the skies like a veil.

Psalm 104.1,2/ב"א קד"א

A reflection on Psalm 104.1 ‘In Psalm 103, the Singer has extolled the God who rescues and loves; here, he exalts the Creator, the Originator of all things, who has set bounds on the seas and given food to His creatures. So beautiful are the light and the skies that he sees them as a robe fit for God to be arrayed in, with their divine designer label!’

November 2 2017 Day 306 Ezekiel 3:16-6:14, Hebrews 4:1-16, Psalm 104:24-35, Proverbs 26:27

וְזָכְרוּ פְּלִיטֵיכֶם אוֹתִי בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבּוּ-שָׁם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּרְתִּי אֶת-לִבִּם הַזֹּנֶה אֲשֶׁר-סָר מֵעָלַי
וְאֵת עֵינֵיהֶם הַזֹּנֹת אַחֲרַי גְּלוּלֵיהֶם וְנִקְטוּ בְּפָנֵיהֶם אֶל-הַרְעוֹת אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לְכָל תּוֹעֵבֹתֵיהֶם
Ve-zokhrù phlitèykhem otì ba-goyim ashèr nishbù sham ashèr nishbàrti et-libbàm ha-zonèh
ashèr sar mey-alày ve-èt eynèyhem ha-zonòt acharèy gelulèyhem, ve-naqòtu bi-phnèyhem el
ha-ra’ot ashèr asù, le-khòl to’abhotèyhem.

And those among you who become refugees will remember me among the nations to which you are deported, for I am crushed by their prostituted hearts which have withdrawn from me and by their eyes, selling themselves to their non-god idols; they will end up despising themselves for all the wickedness they have committed, for all their atrocities.

Ezekiel 6.9/ו"ט יחזקאל

A reflection on Ezekiel 6.9 ‘The words Ezekiel delivers here are the words of a crushed and broken husband whose beloved wife has left him to go and sell herself to others; they reveal the pain which our brokenness and wickedness causes our Creator when He sees the atrocity of our selfish hedonism, rejecting His love and joy for darkness and death. The prodigal refugees of Judah, grieving the loss of everything, in the pigsty of their betrayal, will remember their Lover, the God who will redeem them from slavery once again and bring them home.’

Σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέση τῆς ἀπειθείας.

Spoudhàsomen oun eeselthèen ees ekìneen teen katàpavsin, ìna mee en to avtò tis ypodhìgmati pèsee tees apeethèeas.

So let us endeavour to enter into that cessation from our activity, so that none of us falls into that same pattern of behaviour through not trusting.

Hebrews/Εβραίουσ 4.11

A reflection on Hebrews 4.11 ‘There is a nice irony here in the writer’s instruction to us to try hard to stop trying so hard! The picture being drawn on here is of Israel, who did not trust God’s provision of the promised land, which they were to just enter, but rather doubted God and refused to take Him at His word. If we keep trying to please God by our good deeds, we are not trusting His provision for us in Jesus to deal once and for all with our past shame. We are to stop trying and to start trusting!’

November 3 2017 Day 307 Ezekiel 7:1-9:11, Hebrews 5:1-14, Psalm 105:1-15, Proverbs 26:28

וְאָרָא וְהִנֵּה דְמוּת כְּמַרְאֵה-אִשׁ מִמַּרְאֵה מִתְנַיִו וּלְמַטָּה אִשׁ וּמִמַּתְנַיִו וּלְמַעְלָה כְּמַרְאֵה-זֹהָר
כְּעֵין הַחֲשָׁמַלָּה

Va-er’èh, ve-hinèh demùt ke-mar’èh esh mi-mar’èh motnàv u-le-mattàh esh u-mi-matnàv u-le-mal’àh ke-mar’èh zòhar ke-èyn ha-chashmalàh.

When I looked, I saw what appeared to be like a fiery figure, the brilliance flaming up and down through him, the colour of polished bronze.

Ezekiel 8.2/ב"ב/ח

A reflection on Ezekiel 8.2 ‘When prophets encounter visible manifestations of the unseen realm, they often struggle to put into words what they experience; here Ezekiel sees a ‘likeness’, an ‘image’ with flames going up and down him, the colour of polished bronze. This figure then lifts him up by the hair, and shows him terrible things going on in the Temple, horrible travesties of God’s space. We can never ‘manage’ the Divine; He will always overawe us, and leave us reaching for words to describe Him, but this will therefore always leave us knowing Him deeper too.’

καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ πᾶσιν αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.

Kai teleiothis eyèneto tis ypakou-ousin avtò pàsìn aítios soteerías aioníou, prosagorevthèes ypò tou Theou archierèvs katà teen tàxin Melchisedèk.

And having been made complete, for those who obey Him, (Jesus) has become the one who has achieved their rescue in perpetuity, already having been given by God the designation of high priest in the line of Melchizedek.

Hebrews/Εβραίους 5.9,10

A reflection on Hebrews 5.9,10 ‘Put very simply, the designation upon Jesus of Melchizedek’s priesthood means that He is in the line of the one to whom Abraham himself deferred as God’s man sent to represent Him. We know little else about the mystic figure of the ‘King of Integrity, King of Peace’, other than that he is priest of El-Shaddai, Most High God. From this point of view, he predates the priesthood of the Levites who are still to come. As the One who is enfolded into the very being of that Most High God, Jesus alone is now that perfect advocate and representative.’

November 4 2017 Day 308 Readings Ezekiel 10:1-11:25, Hebrews 6:1-20, Psalm 105:16-36, Proverbs 27:1-2

וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְהִסְרֹתִי לֵב הָאֶבֶן מִבְּשָׂרָם וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר

Ve-natati lahèm lebh echàd, ve-rùach chadashàh etèn, be-kirbexhem ve-hasiroti lev ha-èbhen mib-saràm ve-natati lahèm lebh basàr

And I will give them a single heart, and a renewed spirit I will give them, and I will remove their heart of stone from their body and give them a heart of flesh

Ezekiel 11v19/ יחזקאל יא"ט

A reflection on Ezekiel 11.19 ‘God’s promise through Ezekiel is a single, united heart and a renewed spirit for His people, echoing the Psalmist’s prayer ‘unite my heart in awe of Your name.’ (Psalm 86.11) A divided, duplicitous heart is inimical to worship and surrender to the Lord. We need one goal, one focus, one heart of soft flesh given to God.’

ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος

Een os ànkyran èchomen tees pseechèes asphalèe te kai bhebhaiàn kai eeserchomènen ees to esòteron tou katapetàsmatos.

This (hope) we have as an anchor for our soul, unfailing and solid, going right into the place beyond the curtain.

Hebrews/Εβραίους 6.19

A reflection on Hebrews 6.19 ‘The writer of the letter to Hebrews gives us a strong image of our hope as the anchor, holding us firm and solid even through storms, taking us right into the very holiest, closest place with God, beyond the once-dividing temple curtain, since Jesus has gone there as the pioneer; we now enter by the way He made for us there.’

יְהַלְלֶכְחָ זָר וְלֹא-פִיךָ נִכְרִי וְאֶל-שִׁפְתֶיךָ

Yehallèlkha zar ve-lò pheekhà, nokhrì ve-àl sphetèykha

Let another praise you, not your own mouth; someone else, not your own lips

Proverbs 27v2/ב"ב מְשַׁלִּי

A reflection on Prov.27.2 ‘In a world of constant self-promotion and self-advancement, the wise man of Proverbs points us to the best means of moving forward – let others recognise your gift and open the door for you. If we refrain from praising our own achievements, it gives others room to highlight what they appreciate about what we bring to the party.’

November 5 2017 Day 309 Readings Ezekiel 12:1-14:11, Hebrews 7:1-17, Psalm 105:37-45, Proverbs 27:3

בֶּן-אָדָם בְּתוֹךְ בַּיִת-הַמְרִי אֵתָהּ יָשֵׁב אֲשֶׁר עֵינָיִם לָהֶם לְרֹאוֹת וְלֹא רָאוּ אָזְנַיִם לָהֶם לִשְׁמָע וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ כִּי בַיִת מְרִי הֵם

Ben-Adàm, be-tòkh beyt-hamerì atàh yoshèbh, ashèr eynàyim lahèm lir’òt, ve-lò ra’ù, oznàyim lahèm lishmòà, ve-lò shamè’u, ki beyt-hamerì hem

Son of man, you live in a house of contention, who have eyes to see, but will not see, ears to hear, but they will not hear, for they are a house of contention

Ezekiel 12v2/ יחזקאל יב"ב

A reflection on Ezekiel 12.2 ‘Since the days in the desert, Israel had been contentious in her walk with God, always arguing and grumbling about His actions toward them, even though He is their rescuer. Contention blinds us and deafens us to grace, for the contentious heart is more set on strife than on peace.’

ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν δεδεκάτωκε τὸν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας εὐλόγηκε·

O dhe mèe yenealogòumenos ex avtòn dedekàtoke ton Abhra’àm, kai ton èchonda tas epangelias evlòyeeke.

(Speaking of the ancient Priest, Melchizedek.)

But the one who does not trace his genealogy from them (the Levites) received Abraham’s tithe, and blessed the promise-bearer.

Hebrews/Εβραίους 7.6

A reflection on Hebrews 7.6 'In this chapter, the writer to the Hebrews is making the point that Jesus' high priesthood for us before the Father does not depend on His being of the tribe of Levi, the tribe designated as priests under the Mosaic code. Rather, Jesus has a priesthood derived from Melchizedek, King of Salem, (Gen.14.18) which Abraham himself acknowledged in his paying to him the tenth part of his increase (the tithe). Abraham, who trusted God, and is the ancestor of Levi, is blessed by one whose priesthood is greater because it is that of the coming Messiah Himself, the order of the King of Righteousness.'

פָּרַשׁ עָנַן לְמַסָּךְ וְאֵשׁ לְהַאִיר לַיְלָה

Paràsh anàn le-masàkh ve-èysh le-ha-ìr làylah.

He spread out a cloud as a shade, and a fire to illuminate the night.

Psalm 105.39/תהילים קה"לט

A reflection on Psalm 105.39 'During their desert progress, the Lord showed amazing care for His people in practical ways. In the burning heat of the desert, He spread a cloud over their dwellings to protect from the sun, and at night came in a pillar of fire to give them light to disperse the inky blackness. In every way, He wanted to show them His devotion and love, despite their murmuring against Him.'

November 6 2017 Day 310 Readings Ezekiel 14:12-16:41, Hebrews 7:18-28, Psalm 106:1-12, Proverbs 27:4-6

וְאֵבֵר עָלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶה וְהִנֵּה עִתָּךְ עֵת דְּדִים וְאֶפְרֹשׁ כְּנָפֵי עָלֶיךָ וְאֶכְסֶה עֲרוֹתֶךָ וְאֶשְׁבַּע לָךְ
וְאֲבוֹא בְּבְרִית אִתְּךָ נָא אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה--וְתַהֲיֶי-לִי

Va-e'ebhòr alàyikh, va-er'èkh ve-hinèh, ittèkh eyt dodim, va-ephròsh kenaphì alàyikh, va-akhasèh ervatèkh va-eshabhà lakh va-abhò bhi-bherit otàkh, ne'ùm Adonài Elohim va-tihyì li.

So when I passed by and looked, there you were at the age to be courted and married, so I covered you over with my robe to hide your nakedness and I made vows to you and entered a covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you were mine.

Ezekiel 16.8/יחזקאל טז"ח

A reflection on Ezekiel 16.8 'The Scriptures are unashamed in their presentation of the Lord as the pursuing lover, who commits in passionate faithfulness to His bride, His people, wooing them and taking them on, even when they have nothing to offer in return. He enters an unbreakable covenant with Israel, and lavishes care upon them, the image of the attentive and devoted husband.'

ὄθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ Θεῷ, πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.

Òthen kai sòzin ees to pandelès dhýnatai tous proserchomènous dhi'avtòu to Theò, pàndote zon ees to endynchànin ypèr avtòn.

So then, He (Jesus) is able to rescue every one of those who come to God, since He goes on living forever to intercede for them.

Hebrews/Εβραϊους 7.25

A reflection on Hebrews 7.25 'Today, before the face of the Father, the Lord Jesus stands, with the wounds of Calvary still in His hands, feet and side, continually presenting our cause and His sacrifice for us, for the sake of the eternal rescue and life of all who come to God. Jesus has paid the bride price; one day this High Priest will be sent again by the Father to come and receive us, His bride!'

November 7 2017 Day 311 Readings Ezekiel 16:42-17:24, Hebrews 8:1-13, Psalm 106:13-31, Proverbs 27:7-9

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֲנִי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ בִּימֵי נְעוּרֶיךָ וְהִקִּימוֹתִי לָךְ בְּרִית עוֹלָם

Ve-zakhàrti anì et-beritì ot-khà bimèy nuràyikh, ve-haqimotì lakh berit olàm

(In spite of your unfaithfulness) I remembered My covenant with you in the days of your childhood, and so I will establish for you that covenant without limits.

Ezekiel 16v60/ יחזקאל טז"ס

A reflection on Ezekiel 16.60 ‘God’s covenant is irrevocable and limitless, despite His people’s faithlessness. Even when they are unfaithful, He remains faithful, determined through them and the coming Messiah to bless the whole earth.’

τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς, ἣν ἔπηξεν ὁ Κύριος, καὶ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος.

Ton ayìon litourgòs kai tees skeenèes tees aleethinèes, een èpeexen o Kýrios, kai ouk ànthropos.

(Jesus is) leader of the worship in the holy place, the true tent which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Hebrews/Εβραϊους 8.2

A reflection on Hebrews 8.2 ‘The writer to the Hebrews describes Jesus as the ‘liturgos’ here, meaning one who serves and leads. Jesus is the leader of our worship in the tent of worship, the place given by God’s revelation as His interface with His people. He is not looking for our structures, He doesn’t need our institutions; what He wants is to be close to us in intimacy, and, as with any tent, ready to move to the next place in the journey when He moves.’

November 8 2017 Day 312 Readings Ezekiel 18:1-19:14, Hebrews 9:1-10, Psalm 106:32-48, Proverbs 27:10

וְאַמַּרְתֶּם מַדּוּעַ לֹא-נָשָׂא הַבֵּן בְּעוֹן הָאָב וְהַבֵּן מִשְׁפַּט וְצַדִּיקָה עָשָׂה אֶת כָּל-חֻקוֹתַי שְׁמַר וַיַּעֲשֶׂה אִתְּם--חַיָּה יְחִיָּה

Va-amartèm, ‘Madùà lo nasà ha-bèyn ba-avòn ha-àbh?’ Ve-ha-bèyn mishpàt u-tzedaqàh asàh et kol chuqqotài shamàr va-ya’asèh otàm, chayòh yichyèh.

You are asking then, ‘Why does the son not bear the failure of his father?’; if the son has done what is right and just and has kept all my instructions and has carried them out, he will certainly live.

Ezekiel 18.19/ יחזקאל יח"ט

A reflection on Ezekiel 18.19 ‘The concept of vendetta runs through many human societies, the idea that families must be avenged on generations to come. But God knows nothing of vendetta; each one takes responsibility for their own actions, good and bad. The child who carries God’s heart will not be held to account for the parent’s failures; there is freedom and forgiveness available to all through God’s love no matter what the past.’

εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος, ὃ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων, τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ Ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἀγίων ὁδόν, ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχούσης στάσιν·

Ees dhe teen dhevtèran àpax tou eniavtòu mònos o archierèvs, ou chorìs àimatos, o prosphèri ypèr eavtòu kai ton tou la-ðu agnoemàton, tòuto dheelòundos tou Pnèvmatos tou Ayìou, mèero pefaneròsthai teen ton ayìon odhòn, èti tees pròtees skeenèes echòusees stàsin.

But into this further section (of the worship tent) the high priest went alone just once a year, and not without a blood-sacrifice, offered for his own and the people's failures; by this the Holy Spirit was indicating that the way into the Holy of Holies was not yet fully available while the original worship-tent was still standing.

Hebrews/Εβραίους 9.7-8

A reflection on Hebrews 9.7-8 'The writer to the Hebrews highlights the role of the worship-tent of Israel as a stop-gap ordinance, evidenced by the need for repeated sacrifice for sin year after year ón the Day of Atonement. Now that Messiah has come with the once-for-all sacrifice of His own blood into the very throne room of His Father, of which the earthly Holy of Holies was a reflection, there is no need for God to be confined to meeting His people in a tent or a temple. He can now come and live in their very hearts!'

November 9 2017 Day 313 Readings Ezekiel 20:1-49, Hebrews 9:11-28, Psalm 107:1-43, Proverbs 27:11

וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל-מְדִבְרַת הָעַמִּים וְנִשְׁפָּטֶתִי אֶתְכֶם שָׁם בְּפָנִים אֶל-פָּנִים

Ve-heybheyti etkhèm el midbàr ha-amìm, ve-nishpàteti etkhèm sham panìm el pànìm.

So I am going to bring you into the wasteland of the nations, and there I will set you to rights, face to face.

Ezekiel 20.35/ יחזקאל כ"ה

A reflection on Ezekiel 20.35 'The desert of Sinai was the place where the Lord met with and trained His people, but now He is taking them into a desert of exile among foreign peoples, so that He can focus them on Himself and set them to rights, face to face. God is still pursuing one thing, even in the midst of the terrible experiences of loss and suffering His people go through – to bring them into intimacy and experience of Himself, to be His sign of grace to the planet.'

οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα ἅγια εἰσῆλθεν ὁ Χριστός, ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν·

Ou gar ees cheeropì-eeta àgia eesèelthen o Christòs, antitypa ton aleethinòn, all'ees avtòn ton ouranòn, nyn emphanisthèenai to prosòpo tou Theòu ypèr eemòn.

For the Messiah has not gone into some manufactured sanctuary that is just a counterpart of the real thing; rather He has gone into heaven itself, appearing now before the face of God on our behalf.

Hebrews/Εβραίους 9.24

A reflection on Hebrews 9.24 'Whereas the tabernacle and its successor, the temple, were the 'antitypes', just earthly representations of heaven's reality, Jesus has taken the wounds of Calvary into the actual residence of God, and now stands before the presence-face of the Father, with His own covenant-sealing blood, definitively reconciling us to Him.'

November 10 2017 Day 314 Readings Ezekiel 21:1-22:31, Hebrews 10:1-17, Psalm 108:1-13, Proverbs 27:12

וַאֲבַקֵּשׁ מֵהֵם אִישׁ גֹּדֶר-גֹּדֶר וְעֹמֵד בַּפֶּרֶץ לְפָנַי בְּעַד הָאָרֶץ לְבַלְתִּי שַׁחַתָּהּ וְלֹא מָצָאתִי
Ve-abhaqèsh meyhèm ish godèr-gadèr, ve-omèd ba-pèretz le-phanày, be-àd ha-àretz le-bhilti
shachatah ve-lò matzati

So I looked among them for someone to repair the breach, and to stand guard in the gap in the wall in My presence, on behalf of the land lest I should destroy it, but I found no-one

Ezekiel 22v30/ יחזקאל כב"ל

A reflection on Ezekiel 22.30 ‘The Lord speaks through Ezekiel that He expected to find someone who would cry out to Him for the sake of the land which has descended into such corruption and yet, no one cared; the whole nation has turned its back on the Maker of heaven and earth, leading to its being put into the smelting fire of God’s judgement so that He can bring something worthwhile out of the scrap, and remove the dross. He has to take drastic measures when such hardness of heart has occurred.’

αὐτὸς δὲ μίαν ὑπὲρ ἀμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκδεχόμενος ἕως τεθῶσιν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ. μιᾷ γὰρ προσφορᾷ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς τοὺς ἀγιαζομένους.

Avtòs dhe mian ypèr amartiòn prosenènkas thysìan ees to dhi-eenekès ekàthisen en dhexià tou Theòu, to lipòn ekdhechòmenos èos tethòsin i echthri avtòu ypopòdhion ton podhòn avtòu. Mià gar prospforà tetelèeoken ees to dhi-eenekès tous ayiazomènous.

But this (priest, Jesus), having presented a singular sacrifice for all failures, sat down on the right side of God, awaiting what remains, the placing of his foes like a stool under His feet. For by this one offering He has accomplished the work of making His people irrevocably His own, in perpetuity.

Hebrews/Εβραίους 10.12-14

A reflection on Hebrews 10.12-14 ‘The Aaronic sacrifices continue daily (indicating that this letter was written before the destruction of the Temple in 70AD), but Jesus has sat down – His is a position of having finished the work, now waiting for the fulfilment of His Father’s timing for the effect of His work to be achieved, which is to bring to full maturity (and to full complement) the company of those who have been made His alone through His death.’

אֹדֶכָּה בְּעַמִּים יְהוָה וְאֶזְמְרָךְ בְּלְאֻמִּים כִּי-גָדוֹל מַעַל-שָׁמַיִם חֶסֶדְךָ וְעַד-שָׁחַקִים אֲמַתְךָ
Odèkha ba-ammim Adonài va-azamèrekha ba-le’ummim ki gadòl mé’al shamàyim
chasdèkha, ve-àd shechaqim amitèkha.

I will give thanks to You, Lord, among the peoples and celebrate You in music among the nations, for Your covenant-bonded grace reaches higher than the heavens, and Your trustworthiness extends to the clouds!

Psalm 108.3,4/ תהילים קח"ד ה

A reflection on Psalm 108.3,4 ‘The Singer in this song of Israel has an international theme to celebrate and make music about; the covenant-bonded grace of God, the chesed which never fails and the faithful emet-reliability which never ceases; he wants to express how expansive, how unbounded this grace and reliability of God is, so he looks to the skies above and the clouds overhead, the most distant things he can think of, and asserts that this dependable love is higher and wider even than them.’

November 11 2017 Day 315 Readings Ezekiel 23:1-49, Hebrews 10:18-39, Psalm 109:1-31, Proverbs 27:13

וּבְשַׁחַטְתֶּם אֶת-בְּנֵיהֶם לְגִלּוּלֵיהֶם וַיָּבֵאוּ אֶל-מִקְדָּשִׁי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא לְחַלְלוֹ וְהִנֵּה-כֹה עָשׂוּ בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתִי

U-bhe-shachatàm et-benèyhem le-gilulèyhem, va-yabhò-u el-miqdashì ba-yòm ha-hù le-chalelò ve-hinèh, khoh asù be-tòkh beytì

And having murdered their children before their non-gods, they then went into my holy place on the very same day, desecrating it; so now look, what they have done to my own house.

Ezekiel 23v39/ יחזקאל כג"ל ט

A reflection on Ezekiel 23.39 ‘God’s complaint against Judah through Ezekiel is grievous. They have participated in abhorrent child sacrifice and then gone into the Lord’s holy place, bringing shame and unholiness into it. God has to act decisively to curb His people’s grotesque descent into paganism. We too must be ruthless with the rivals to His affection, especially those which implicate us in harm to the defenceless child.’

Ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ, ἣν ἐνεκαίνισεν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ' ἔστι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ...

Èchontes oun, adelphì, parreesìan ees teen èsodon ton ayìon en to àimati Ieesòu, een enekàinisen eemìn odòn pròsphaton kai zòsan dià tou katapetàsματος, tout èsti tees sarkòs avtòu....

Having then, brothers and sisters, confidence to enter into the most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by which He inaugurated for us a newly-opened and live access to Him, beyond the dividing curtain, that is, his flesh...

Hebrews/Εβραϊους 10.19-20

A reflection on Hebrews 10.19-20 ‘The exhortation to believers, in view of all that has gone before in the writer’s thesis, in view of the confidence we have through Jesus’ sacrifice to come into the very presence of the Father Himself, with Jesus there already interceding for us, is to draw near, to come close, with certainty and free from guilt, because of what God has done for us. ‘O Come, all ye faithful..come and adore Him ’ is the invitation to us.’

עֲזְרֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי כְּחֶסֶדְךָ

Ozrèyni, Adonài Elohày; hoshièyni khe-chasdekhà.

Help me, Lord my God; rescue me because of Your covenant-bonded grace.

Psalms 109.26/ תהילים קט"כו

A reflection on Psalm 109.26 ‘The Singer complains of the wrongs done to him, and calls for vindication from the Lord. He knows to call on God’s intervention and rescue, and that God must respond, because of His irrevocable covenant, which has placed Him in a relationship of bonded grace towards His people. What an awesome promise, what a faithful Father!’

November 12 2017 Day 316 Readings Ezekiel 24:1-26:21, Hebrews 11:1-16, Psalm 110:1-7, Proverbs 27:14

וְהָיָה יְחִזְקָאֵל לְכֶם לְמוֹפֶת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה תַעֲשׂוּ. בְּבוֹאָהּ וַיְדַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי אֲדַבֵּר יְהוָה
Ve-hayàh Yechezqèl la-khèm le-mophèt; ke-khòl ashèr asàh, ta’asù, be-bho’àh, vi-da’tèm ki anì adonài Adonài.

So Ezekiel will be to you a prophetic sign; for all he has done, you will do, and when it

happens, you will know that I am the Lord, the LORD. Ezekiel 24v24/ יחזקאל כד"כד

A reflection on Ezekiel 24.24 ‘Ezekiel becomes one of those prophets who, like Hosea, act out through their lives the word of the Lord to His people. This embodied word is a presaging, in many ways, of the God who Himself will come in flesh and live before the world in Jesus the Messiah as a living, dying and rising drama of the destiny of God’s people. There is every reason for us, then, to make space for the dramatic, visualised presentation of God’s word as much as for the spoken.’

Ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.
Èsti dhe pìstis elpizomènon ypòstasis, pragmatòn èlenchos ou bhlepomènon.
So faith is the substance of what is hoped for, the proof of things unseen.
Hebrews/Εβραίουσ 11.1

A reflection on Hebrews 11.1 ‘It is impossible to live human life without faith. We exercise faith every time we sit on a chair, when we drink water, when we take off on a plane. It even requires faith to believe God is not there. For followers of Jesus, our faith is undergirded by firm evidence, not scientific but historic, that Jesus Christ lived, died and was raised from the dead. And this faith supplies Jesus’ people with hope which gives constant signs of the meaning and purpose God has sown into everything.’

November 13 2017 Day 317 Readings Ezekiel 27:1-28:26, Hebrews 11:17-31, Psalm 111:1-10, Proverbs 27:15-16

כה-אמר אדוני יהוה בקבצני את-בית ישראל מן-העמים אשר נפצו בם ונקדשתי בם לעיני הגוים וישבו על-אדמתם אשר נתתי לעבדי ליעקב

Ko amàr adonài Adonài, ‘Be-qabtzi et-bèyt Yisraèl min-ha’amim ashèr naphòtzu bham, ve-niqdashiti bham le-eynèi ha-goyim, ve-yashvù al-admatàm, ashèr nataiti le-abhdi, le-Yà’aqobh.’

So says my Lord, the LORD, ‘In gathering the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they were dispersed, I will distinguish myself as in a class of my own (make myself holy) in the eyes of the nations, and they will live in their land, which I gave to my servant, Jacob.’

Ezekiel 28v25/ יחזקאל כח"כה

A reflection today on Ezekiel 28.25: ‘Ezekiel pronounces that Israel’s neighbours will no longer be able to rejoice over her sufferings, and exploit her loss. He reiterates the Lord’s plan to restore her after the time of exile. The Lord will be seen to be matchless among all the nations as He returns His people to His land.’

Πίστει Ῥαὰβ ἡ πόρνη οὐ συναπώλετο τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι, δεξαμένη τοὺς κατασκόπους μετ’ εἰρήνης.

Pìstee Ra-àbh ee pòrnee ou synapòleto tis apeethèesasi, dhexamènee tous kataskòpous met irèenees.

Through faith, Rahab the prostitute did not perish with the faithless, having taken in the spies in peace.

Hebrews/Εβραίουσ 11.31

A reflection on Hebrew 11.31 ‘In this catalogue of faith, Rahab is an unusual case. She is a Gentile, a prostitute and in the line of fire of the incoming people of Israel. Yet she knows the power of covenant, and in extending peaceful shelter to Israel’s spies in Jericho, she knows they must show the obligation of covenant, chesed, to her. Believing this, she entrusts her life and her family to the power of covenant, and experiences the covenant-bonded grace of God.’

November 14 2017 Day 318 Readings Ezekiel 29:1-30:26, Hebrews 11:32-12:13, Psalm 112:1-10, Proverbs 27:17

כה-אמר אדני יהוה והאבדתני גלולים והשבתי אליהם מנף ונשיא מארץ-מצרים
לא יהיה עוד ונתתי יראה בארץ מצרים

Ko amàr adonài Adonài, ‘Ve-ahabhàdeti gelulim, ve-hishbatì elilim mi-Nòph, ve-nasìm me-èretz Mitzràim lo yìhyeh od, ve-natàti yiràh be-èretz Mitzràim

This is what my Lord, the LORD says; so I will destroy the non-god idols, and finish off their statues at Memphis, and there will be no more ‘prince of Egypt’, for I will bring fear to the land of Egypt

Ezekiel 30v13/ יחזקאל ל"ג

A reflection on Ezekiel 30.13 ‘In Ezekiel’s time, the power of Egypt was very much on the scene in international affairs. Their ragbag of non-gods, with people worshipping all kinds of creatures and images, the Lord says, will come to nothing and Pharaoh, himself considered divine, will fall to the incoming armies. There is only one source of hope for the world – the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth.’

Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς, τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων,
ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἀμαρτίαν, δι’ ὑπομονῆς
τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα

Tigaròun kai eemèes, tosdùton èchondes perikèemenon eemìn nèphos martýron, ònkon apothèmeni pànda kai teen evperìstaton amartìan, dhi ypomonèes trèchomen ton prokèemenon eemìn agòna.

So in light of this, enveloped as we are by such a vast cloud of accounts of faith, discarding every hindrance and wrong that easily thwarts us, let us run with determination the race marked out in front of us.

Hebrews/Εβραίους 12.1

A reflection on Hebrews 12.1 ‘The picture the writer is evoking in this verse is that of the games, where a crowd of those already having run their races, and won their wreaths of glory, are cheering on those of us now coming down the course. No athlete runs in coat and boots, but discards everything which will slow them down; so we also, determined as we are to reach the finishing line of our heat, must get rid of everything, good or bad, which will divert us from the goal of life fully lived out for Jesus.’

November 15 2017 Day 319 Readings Ezekiel 31:1-32:32, Hebrews 12:14-29, Psalm 113:1-114:8, Proverbs 27:18-20

יפה עשיתיו ברב דליותיו ויקנאהו כל-עצי-עדן אשר בגן האלהים
Yaphèh asìtiv be-ròbh daliyotàv va-yeqanùhu kol atzèy Èyden ashèr be-gàn ha-Elohìm.
(Of Assyria, God says) I made him beautiful with his extensive branches, so that he was the envy of all the trees of Eden in the garden of God.

Ezekiel 31.9/ יחזקאל לא"ט

A reflection on Ezekiel 31.9 ‘Ezekiel is prophesying the downfall of the great Assyrian empire, but reminds them that it was the Lord who gave them their beauty and influence, as the domain in which the story of Eden took place, the ‘garden of God’. But they have not acknowledged His making them great, and have set themselves up in power and oppression. It should all have been so different for people who were given such extensive natural resources.’

καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτη Ἰησοῦ, καὶ αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ κρεῖττον λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ.

Kai diathèkees nèas mesitee Yeesòu, kai àimati randismòu krìtton lalòundi parà ton Àbhel. And (you have come) to the executor of a new covenant, and to spilt blood which declares something much better than Abel's did.

Hebrews/Εβραϊους 12.24

A reflection on Hebrews 12.24 'Abel, the first human to die in the Bible, and that by the hand of his own brother, is the sign of the sadness which engulfs the world after humanity's rebellion. Abel's name in the Hebrew means 'transient, a breath', the same word later used by the preacher in Ecclesiastes to signify the futility of things without God. But the blood of Jesus, also shed in anger and hatred, has turned the world around, and has opened up the New Covenant for all who will trust in Him; for He is not only the One who died, but the One who rose again and is the executor of His own will and testament, giving us as an inheritance, eternal life in Him!'

November 16 2017 Day 320 Readings Ezekiel 33:1-34:31, Hebrews 13:1-25, Psalm 115:1-18, Proverbs 27:21-22

אָמַר אֲלֵיהֶם חַי-אֲנִי נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה אֱמַחֲפֹץ בְּמוֹת הַרָשָׁע כִּי אִם-בְּשׁוּב רָשָׁע מִדַּרְכּוֹ וְחַיָּה שׁוּבוּ שׁוּבוּ מִדַּרְכֵיכֶם הַרְעִים וְלָמָּה תָמוּתוּ בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל

Emòr alèyhem, 'Chay anì', ne-ùm adonài Adonài, 'im echpòtz be-mòt ha-rashà'? Ki im be-shùbh rashà' mi-darkò, ve-chayàh; shùbhhu, shùbhhu mi-darkhèykhem ha-ra'im ve-lamàh tamutù, beyt Yisra'èl?'

Say to them, 'As I live', says my Lord, the LORD, 'do I enjoy the death of the unrighteous? Rather, I want the unrighteous to turn their back on their behaviour, and live; turn around, turn around from your evil ways – why are you intent on death, house of Israel?'

Ezekiel 33v11/ יחזקאל לג"א

A reflection on Ezekiel 33.11: 'The Lord takes no delight in the punishment of sin. It is like the amputation of a gangrenous limb – the body is the less for it afterwards. But the Lord is just, and looks for every opportunity to rescue and redeem. The outcome is upon our own heads.'

Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς χθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

Yeesòus Christòs chthes kai sèmeron o avtòs kai ees tous aìdnas.

Messiah Jesus, consistently the same, yesterday, today and through the ages.

Hebrews/Εβραϊους 13.8

A reflection on Hebrews 13.8 'Very little in our lives remains constant and consistent throughout; yet the writer to the Hebrews asserts that the Messiah, Jesus is just that, throughout the generations. His love, His redemption, His power and His hope has sustained His people through the centuries and will continue without limit.'

November 17 2017 Day 321 Readings Ezekiel 35:1-36:38, James 1:1-18, Psalm 116:1-19, Proverbs 27:23-27

וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חָדָשׁ אֶתֶן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְהִסַּרְתִּי אֶת-לֵב הָאֲבָן מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם וְנָתַתִּי
לָכֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר

Ve-natati lakhèm lebh chadàsh, ve-rùach chadashàh ettèn be-kirbekhèm, ve-hasìroti et-lèbh ha-èbhen mi-besarkhèm ve-natati lakhèm lebh basàr.

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will give inside of you, and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36v26/ יחזקאל לו"כו

A reflection on Ezekiel 36.26: 'It is possible to have all the right words and the rights beliefs and yet have a heart of stone. Israel had become hard-hearted and needed to be ploughed up again, like dry ground, ready for the sowing of new life, which comes in Jesus the Messiah, and His Spirit, into which His people are immersed and by which they are filled.'

ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω, ἵνα ἦτε τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι, ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι.

Et dhe ypomonèe èrgon tèleion echèto, ìna èete tèlee-i kai olòkleeri, en meedheni leepòmeni. So let endurance work its purpose out, so that you will be mature and whole, lacking nothing. James/Ἰακωβου 1.4

A reflection on James 1.4 'Jesus' brother, Jacob (known to English speakers as James), leader of the believers in Jerusalem is perhaps the most obviously Jewish of the New Testament writers. He is intensely practical, reflecting the Hebrew worldview which sees relationship with God not as a theoretical affair, but a lived-out reality, transforming everyday life. Here, he encourages his readers to embrace endurance through testing times as a virtue which matures and brings wholeness; the life of a Jesus-apprentice is bound to bring suffering as well as joy. James invites us not to run from, but to grow through the tough times into the full stature of Jesus.'

שׁוּבִי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחַיִּי כִי-יְהוֹה גָּמַל עָלַיִּי

Shùbhi naphshì li-menuchàykhi, ki Adonài gamàl alàykhi

Return, my soul, to your rest, for the LORD has completely satisfied you.

Psalm 116v7/ תהילים קטז"ז

A reflection on Psalm 116.7: 'Another Psalm with no ascription, this is a personal thanksgiving for the Lord's rescue of an embattled soul. In crying out to the Lord, he experiences the free-will favour and compassion of the Lord. In this place, he calls his soul to return to its rest, for the Lord has relieved him from the pain and the distress. This results in a desire to give back to the Lord for this joy He has bestowed.'

November 18 2017 Day 322 Readings Ezekiel 37:1-38:23, James 1:19-2:17, Psalm 117:1-2, Proverbs 28:1

וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם בְּרִית עוֹלָם יְהִי־אֹתָם וְנָתַתִּים וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֹתָם וְנָתַתִּי אֶת-מִקְדָּשִׁי
בְּתוֹכְכֶם לְעוֹלָם

Ve-kharati lahèm berit shalòm, berit olàm yihyèh otàm; u-netatèm ve-hirbeti otàm, ve-natati et-miqdashì be-tokhàm le-olàm

And I will carve out for them a covenant of peace, a covenant without limit it will be for them; and I will endow them, and I will put my sacred place among them forever

Ezekiel 37.26/ יחזקאל לז"כו

A reflection on Ezekiel 37.26: ‘In the vision of the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel encounters God’s desire to resurrect His people to His original covenanted intention for them, a people immersed in His Spirit and inhabited by His presence. It is this same intention to which the nations beyond Israel are called through the redemption of Messiah Jesus, as we become sharers in the covenant, Abraham’s sons and daughters by faith.’

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, ἔστω δὲ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχύς εἰς τὸ ἀκούσαι, βραδύς εἰς τὸ λαλήσαι, βραδύς εἰς ὀργήν· ὀργὴ γὰρ ἀνδρός δικαιοσύνην Θεοῦ οὐκ κατεργάζεται.

Òste, adhelphì moo agapeetì, èsto dhe pas ànthropos tachýs ees to akòusai, bhradhýs ees to lalèesai, bhradhýs ees or-yèen; oryèe gar andròs dhikaiosýneen Theòu ouk katergàzetai. So, my beloved brothers, let every man be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry; for man’s anger does not achieve God’s justice.

James/Ἰακωβου 1.19,20

A reflection on James 1.19,20 ‘James-Jacob’s wise words seem to specify the issue of male anger. While we can consider language inclusive, it is specifically men that he is targetting here, knowing that a man who grows angry can become destructive. The writer makes it clear that listening to each other is paramount, with speech being considered before it is delivered, and anger not allowed to get out of hand, nor to be presented as a means to God’s justice. God’s justice, he says, is not achieved by a man’s anger.’

November 19 2017 Day 323 Readings Ezekiel 39:1-40:27, James 2:18-3:18, Psalm 118:1-18, Proverbs 28:2

וְלֹא-אֶסְתִּיר עוֹד פְּנֵי מַהֵם אֲשֶׁר שִׁפְכֹתִי אֶת-רוּחִי עַל-בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה
Ve-lò astir od panày meyhèm ashèr shaphàkhti et-ruchì al-bèyt Yisra’èl ne’ùm Adonài Elohìm

‘And I will not conceal my face any longer from those on whom I have poured out my Spirit, the house of Israel’ says the Lord God. Ezekiel 39v29/כֹּט"ט לֹא-אֶסְתִּיר

A reflection on Ezekiel 39.29 ‘For long enough, God had stayed behind the veil in the Tabernacle and the Temple, though His desire was always to meet face to face with His people. Now, through the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord reveals His intention to be close up and personal with His people on whom His very breath would be felt, the Spirit of God who is poured out without measure; in Jesus the Messiah, the face of God would at last revealed and seen in all His glory.’

ἢ δὲ ἄνωθεν σοφία πρῶτον μὲν ἀγνή ἐστιν, ἔπειτα εἰρήνικὴ, ἐπιεικὴς, εὐπειθὴς, μεστή ἐλέους καὶ καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἀδιάκριτος καὶ ἀνυπόκριτος.

Ee dhe ànothen sophìa pròton men agnèe-estin, èpita eerènikèe, epieekèes, evpeethèes, mestèe elèous kai karpòn agathòn, adhiàkritos kai anypòkritos.

But the superior wisdom is first of all pure, then peaceful, gentle, co-operative, full of compassion, producing good, impartial and without hypocrisy.

James /Ἰακωβου 3.17

A reflection on James 3.17 ‘Wisdom in Biblical terms is never just a body of information stored in the head or in a library; it is always understanding resulting in experience, with an affect on conduct. To know of God, in terms of Jewish understanding, results in bowing down in worship before Him. Wisdom has its source in the awe of God, and is embodied most perfectly in Jesus the Messiah from Nazareth, who is the ‘wisdom of God and the power of God’ (1 Cor. 1.24)’

Ozi ve-zimràt Yah, va-yehi li liyshu-àh.

The Lord is my might and my music, and He has been my rescuer.

תהילים קיח"ד/118.14/Psalm

A reflection on Psalm 118.14 ‘When we experience the rescue of God from the meaninglessness of life without Him, our lives are filled with His strength and His music; these sustain us through our whole journey, to its completion.’

November 20 2017 Day 324 Readings Ezekiel 40:28-41:26, James 4:1-17, Psalm 118:19-29, Proverbs 28:3-5

הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עֵץ שְׁלוֹשׁ אַמּוֹת גְּבוּהַ וְאַרְכּוֹ שְׁתַּיִם אַמּוֹת וּמִקְצֵעוֹתָיו לוֹ וְאַרְכּוֹ וְקִירָתָיו עֵץ וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלַי--זֶה הַשְּׁלֻחָן אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

Ha-mizbè-ach etz shalòsh ammòt gabhòah ve-arkò shtàyim ammòt u-miqtzo'otàv lo ve-arkò ve-qìrotàv etz va-yedabbèr elày, ‘Zeh ha-shulchàn ashèr liphnèy Adonài.’

The wooden altar was three cubits (four and a half feet) high and its length was two cubits (three feet) ; its corners, bases and sides were all of wood and he said to mé, ‘This is the table which stands before the face of the Lord.’

יחזקאל מא"כ/41.22/Ezekiel

A reflection on Ezekiel 41.22 ‘The angel is carefully showing to Ezekiel the heavenly outline for the new temple in his vision. The table of the presence in the holy place is of plain wood overall – the gold overlay does not seem to be there. What makes this altar-table so glorious is not the materials covering it, but the fact it stands before the presence-face of the Lord Himself.’

μοιχὶ καὶ μοιχαλίδες, οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου ἔχθρα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστίν; ὃς ἂν οὖν βουληθῆι φίλος εἶναι τοῦ κόσμου, ἐχθρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ καθίσταται.

Michì kai michalìdhes, ouk ìdhate òti ee philìa tou kòsmou èchthra tou Theòu-estin? Os anoun bhouleethèe phìlos èenai tou kòsmou, echthròs tou Theòu kathìstatai.

You men and women cheating on God, don't you know that loving this world-system puts you at odds with Him? So whoever wants to be in cahoots with this world's thinking is placed into the category of opposition to God.

James /Ἰακωβου 4.4

A reflection on James 4.4 ‘The apostle James is not one to mince words, and here especially he is incisive in his outspoken criticism of those who try and have a foot in the world as well as in God; he says they are cheating on God, like men and women cheating on their husbands and wives. To be in cahoots with the world's system is to be in opposition to God. But are we not supposed to love the world? Didn't God so love the world that He sent His only Son?

What we will miss if we are not careful is that God sent His Son to rescue us from the world system, not to endorse it. God's love for the world wants to set us free from the hopeless lie that pretends man's progress without His Maker. There is only one hope for mankind, only one name by which we can ever know rescue, God's Messiah Jesus.’

November 21 2017 Day 325 Readings Ezekiel 42:1-43:27, James 5:1-20, Psalm 119:1-16, Proverbs 28:6-7

וְהִנֵּה כְבוֹד אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּא מִדֶּרֶךְ הַקְּדִים וְקוֹלוֹ כְּקוֹל מַיִם רַבִּים וְהָאָרֶץ הָאֵרָה מִכְבוֹדוֹ
Ve-hinèh, kebhòd Elohèy Yisra'èl ba mi-dèrekh ha-qadim, ve-qolò ke-qòl mayim rabbim ve-ha-àretz he-iràh mi-kebhodò.

And look, the heavy glory of the God of Israel came by way of the east, and His voice was like the sound of many waters and the earth was illuminated by His weighty glory.

Ezekiel 43v2/ יחזקאל מג"ב

A reflection on Ezekiel 43.2: 'Ezekiel sees the 'mobile glory of the Lord' which he witnessed in chapter one entering the new temple he has been shown, and taking up residence there. The term glory in Hebrew (kabhod) is derived from the word for 'heavy, weighty' and expresses the fact that the full, shining import and gravity of God comes with Him wherever He is revealed to mankind; glorious indeed!'

Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν; προσευχέσθω· εὐθυμεῖ τις; ψαλλέτω·

Kakopàthi tis en ymìn? Prosevchèstho; evthymì tis? Psallèto!

Are any of you going through a tough time? Let them keep on praying; is anyone feeling good? Let them keep on worshipping in song!

James /Ἰακωβου 5.13

A reflection on James 5.13 'Jesus' brother, Jacob (whom English speakers call James) is very simple and practical in the gist of his words – keep orientated to the Lord; if things are going badly, let Him know about it by keeping on praying. If things are going well, and you are feeling good, let Him know by singing and making music to Him in worship. This is a life lived in full view of the Lord, so stay engaged with Him in all circumstances.'

November 22 2017 Day 326 Readings Ezekiel 44:1-45:12, 1 Peter 1:1-12, Psalm 119:17-32, Proverbs 28:8-10

פְּאָרֵי פִּשְׁתִּים יִהְיוּ עַל-רֹאשָׁם וּמִכְנָסֵי פִּשְׁתִּים יִהְיוּ עַל-מִתְנֵיהֶם לֹא יִחָגְרוּ בַיָּזַע
Pa'arèy phishtim yihyù al roshàm u-mikhnesèy phishtim yihyù al motnèyhem; lo yahgerù ba-yazà.

There will be linen turbans on their heads and linen coverings around their waists; they will not wear anything that makes them sweat.

Ezekiel 44.18/יחזקאל מד"ח

A reflection on Ezekiel 44.18 'In Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple, he sees the priests wearing turbans and loincloths of linen, material which will not make them sweat. This unusual detail conveys to us that God is not looking for human effort to achieve His work. We are to be at peace in His presence, not stressing ourselves in worship of the One who loves us and receives us unconditionally.'

Εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ κατὰ τὸ πολὺ αὐτοῦ ἔλεος ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν δι' ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν

Evloyeetòs o Theòs kai patèr tou Kyriou eemòn Yeesòu Christòu, o katà to polý avtòu èleos anayennèesas eemàs ees elpidha zòsan dhi'anastàseos Yeesòu Christòu.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, who because of His great mercy has regenerated us into a living hope through the resurrection of Messiah Jesus from the dead.

1 Peter/Πετροῦ A 1.3

A reflection on 1 Peter 1.3 ‘In true Jewish style, Peter blesses God , the Father of Messiah Jesus, for His unprecedented reaching out to us through His Son’ s resurrection, by which we are reborn into hope that lives in each one who trusts Him. Peter goes on to describe this hope as leading us into rejoicing with inexpressible joy, full of weight and import, God’s glory.’

November 23 2017 Day 327 Reading Ezekiel 45:13-46:24, 1 Peter 1:13-2:10, Psalm 119:33-48, Proverbs 28:11

כה-אמר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה כִּי-יִתֵּן הַנָּשִׂיא מַתָּנָה לְאִישׁ מִבְּנָיו נַחֲלָתוֹ הִיא לְבָנָיו תְּהִיָּה אַחֲזַתָּם
הִיא בְּנַחֲלָה וְכִי-יִתֵּן מַתָּנָה מִנַּחֲלָתוֹ לְאֶחָד מֵעַבְדָּיו וְהָיְתָה לוֹ עַד-שְׁנַת הַדְּרוֹר וְשָׁבַת
לְנָשִׂיא אֶף נַחֲלָתוֹ בְּנָיו לָהֶם תְּהִיָּה

Koh amàr adonài Adonài, ‘Ki yittèn ha-nasi’ matanàh le-ìsh mi-banàyv nachalatò, hi le-bhanàyv tihyèh achuzatàm; hi nachalàh. Ve-khì yittèn matanàh mi-nachalatò le-achàd mey-abhadàyv, ve-haytàh lo ad-shenàt ha-deròr, ve-shabhàt la-nasi’; akh nachalatò banàyv la-hèm tihyèh.’

This is what my Lord, the LORD says, ‘If the prince gives a gift to each of his sons, it belongs to their legacy; it will be part of the sons’ inherited estate. But if he gives a gift from his treasury to one of his servants, it will be his just until the year of freedom, then it will revert to the prince; but for his sons it will remain part of their inheritance.

Ezekiel 46.16,17/ יחזקאל מו"ט יז

A reflection on Ezekiel 46.16-17: ‘There is a distinction made between property and gifts made to sons and to servants. The son may keep and hand on his property in perpetuity, but the servant or slave must return it at the jubilee. However, the prince is not permitted to land-grab from the people’s property, thus they are protected from corrupt and greedy leaders. Our joy in the Messiah is that we are made sons and daughters, heirs of God; our inheritance in Him is eternal.’

καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς, ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους τῷ Θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ·

Kai avtì os lithi zòndes ikodhomìsthe ìkos pnevmatikòs, yeràtevma àyion, anenènkai pnevmatikàs thysìas evprosdhèktous to Theò dhià Yeesòu Christòu.

And you too, as living stones, are being built into a home for the Spirit, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices approved by God through Messiah Jesus.

1 Peter/Πετροῦ Α 2.5

A reflection on 1 Peter 2.5 ‘Peter envisages the people of God here as living stones, being built into a home for God’s Spirit to live, having a priestly role accepted by God because of Messiah Jesus. As those living stones, the people of God can only function as a home for the Holy Spirit by being built into something bonded by unity, in togetherness. So often today believers are found as loose bricks lying alone in a corner of the yard instead of built into the fabric of God’s living house, bringing life to and receiving life from others with them. ‘The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion’ asserts John Wesley. He seems to be at one in this with the apostle here.’

November 24 2017 Day 328 Readings Ezekiel 47:1-48:35, 1 Peter 2:11-3:7, Psalm 119:49-64, Proverbs 28:12-13

וְהָיָה כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׂרָץ אֶל כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יִבּוֹא שָׁם נְחָלִים יַחֲיֶיהָ וְהָיָה הַדָּגָה רַבָּה
מְאֹד כִּי בָאוּ שָׁמָּה הַמַּיִם הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּרְפְּאוּ וְחַי--כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִבּוֹא שָׁמָּה הַנְּחָל
Ve-hayàh khol nèphesh chayàh ashèr yishròtz el kol ashèr yabhò sham, nachalàyim yichyèh
ve-hayàh ha-dagàh rabbàh me-òd ki bha-ù shàmmah ha-màyim ha-èyleh va-yeraphe-ù va-
chài, kol ashèr yabhò shàmmah ha-nàchal.

And so it will be that every living thing that reproduces will flourish wherever the river runs and there will also be huge numbers of fish as a result of this water reaching there; there will be healing and life wherever the river flows.

Ezekiel 47.9/ יחזקאל מז"ט

A reflection on Ezekiel 47.9 ‘Ezekiel’s vision of the new temple culminates in his being shown the river of life flowing towards the east from its doorway, down into the Judean desert, one of the most arid parts of the country. As the waters touch the dry ground, it springs to life, and flora and fauna abound, bringing healing and abundance. The river is seen again, at the end of the Scriptures in the final chapter of Revelation, the carrier of new life into the renewed creation. John’s gospel (7.37) connects the river image with the person of the Holy Spirit, the one who is flowing now, God in our lives, bringing healing and abundance wherever we open to His flowing in.’

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἴχνεσιν αὐτοῦ·

Ees tòuto gar eklètheete, oti Christòs èpathen ypèr ymòn, ymìn ypolibànon ypogrammòn ìna epakolouthèeseete tis ìchnesin avtòu.

For you were called to this, since Christ suffered for you, leaving you with a model so that you could follow in His footsteps.

1 Peter/Πετροῦ A 2.21

A reflection on 1 Peter 2.21 ‘For the followers of Messiah Jesus, suffering has significance; it is not pointless hardship. By suffering and dying Himself, Jesus has given His apprentices a path through tough places, knowing that it leads via the grave to resurrection. On the way, their very beings are shaped and refined, encouraging others that the Spirit of God sustains and anchors them even when things are at their darkest, as He did Jesus in His passion.

November 25 2017 Day 329 Readings Daniel 1:1-2:23, 1 Peter 3:8-4:6, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 28:14

לָךְ אֵלֹהִים אֲבֹהָתִי מְהוֹדָא וּמִשְׁבַּח אָנָּה דִּי חֲכֻמְתָּא וּגְבוּרְתָּא יְהִיבְתָּ לִי וְכַעַן הוֹדַעְתָּנִי דִּי-
בְּעֵינָא מְנַף דִּי-מַלְכָּא הוֹדַעְתָּנָא

Lakh Elàh abhahàti mehodèy u-meshabàch anàh, di chokhmetà u-gebhurtà yehàbht li u-khe-
àn hodàtani di bhe-eynà minnàkh di millàt malkà hodatèna.

I thank You and praise You, God of my fathers, for giving me wisdom and strength and for letting me know what we asked of you, since you have let me know what the King is talking about.

Daniël 2.23/כג"ב דניאל

A reflection on Daniel 2.23 ‘Daniel returns thanks to the Lord for revealing to him the secret dream Nebuchadnezzar has refused to reveal to his own soothsayers. Because of this revelation, Daniel will be able to save not only himself, but also the pagan magicians from the king’s wrath. Daniel is aware that this is not because of his own gift, but also because his friends Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael have been praying too, which he acknowledges in his praise of God.

Κύριον δὲ τὸν Θεὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, ἔτοιμοι δὲ ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογία παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος μετὰ πραότητος καὶ φόβου

Kýrion dhe ton Theòn ayiàsate en tais kardhiais ymòn, ètimi dhe a-èe pros apoloyian pandì to aitòundi umàs lògon perì tees en ymìn elpidhos metà praðteetos kai phòbhou.

So keep the Lord God unrivalled in your hearts, ready to give an explanation to anyone asking you the meaning of the hope within you, with gentleness and reverence.

1 Peter/Πετροῦ Α 3.15

A reflection on 1 Peter 3.15 ‘What does it mean to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts? It means to keep Him totally unrivalled. God is holy because He has no equal and brooks no competitors. Yet we constantly are invited by the world to equate His space with other things – to put Him down, in its quest for our allegiance. Peter urges us, then, to keep God totally number One, totally peerless in our hearts, and to be ready to explain to anyone who doubts our single-minded hope, with gentleness and respect, why we will let nothing and no one else take His place in our affection and devotion.

November 26 2017 Day 330 Readings Daniel 2:24-3:30, 1 Peter 4:7-5:14, Psalm 119:81-96, Proverbs 28:15-16

ענה מלכא לדניאל ואמר מן-קשט די אלהכון הוא אלה אלהין ומרא מלכין וגלה רזין
די יכלת למגלא רזא דנה

Anèh malkà le-Dani’èl ve-amàr, ‘Mi qeshòt di Elahàkhon, hu Elàh Elahìn u-marèy ve-galèh razìn, di yekheltà le-miglè razà denàh.’

The King replied to Daniel and said, ‘In truth, your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.’

Daniel 2v47/ דניאל ב"מז

A reflection on Daniel 2.47 ‘Daniel lives out His relationship with God in the full glare of public attention. From the first days of his time in Babylon, he must stand clear of the rivals to God which could compromise his experience of the Lord. God’s gifts and grace to him are seen and recognised at the highest level and his faithful dependence on the Lord saves not only him, but also the pagan magicians around him.’

הן איתי אלהנא די-אנחנא פלחין--יכל לשזבוחנא מן-אתון נורא יקדתא ומן-יך מלכא
ישזב

והן לא ידיע להוא-לך מלכא די לאלהך לא-איתנא פלחין ולצלם דהבא די הקימת, לא
נסגד

Heyn ittài Ellahànu, di anàchnu phalchìn, yakhìl le-sheyzabhutanà’ min-atùn nurà yaqid-tà’ u-mìn yedàkh, Malkà’ yesheyzibh; ve-hèyn la, yedi-a’ lehevè lakh, Malkà’, di l-ellahàkh la-itanà’ phalchìn u-le-tzèlem dahabhà’ di ha-qemtà’ la nisgèd.

If need be, O King, the God whom we serve is able to rescue us from the flames of the burning furnace, so He will save us from your actions, O King. But even if He does not save us, you need to know that we will not worship your non-gods, nor bow down to the gilded statue you have erected. Daniel 3v 17,18/ דניאל ג"יז יח

A reflection on Daniel 3.17,18: ‘The confession of the three friends of Daniel is brave and uncompromising. They will not give up trust in God, even in the face of death. They know a God who can save them, but even if He does not, they will not acknowledge any other. It is this clear witness that impacts Nebuchadnezzar so much, trusting God who walks with them into the fire.’

‘Ο δὲ Θεὸς πάσης χάριτος, ὁ καλέσας ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὀλίγον παθόντας, αὐτὸς καταρτίσει ὑμᾶς, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει·

O dhe Theòs pàsees chàritos, o kalèsas ymàs ees teen aiònion avtòu dhòxan en Christò Yeesòu olighon pathòndas, avtòs katartìsi ymàs, steerìxi, sthenòsi, themeliòsi.

But may the God of all grace Himself, who called you into His limitless magnificence in Messiah Jesus, through this short suffering, form you, fix you, and set you on a firm foundation.

1 Peter/Πετροῦ Α 5.10

A reflection on 1 Peter 5.10 ‘We cannot hope to be formed into any kind of lasting maturity without facing adversity. Peter’s closing prayer for his readers is that beyond the short-term suffering they face, they will be formed, fixed and founded into the limitless magnificence of Messiah Jesus, who Himself learned obedience through the things He went through, being raised to life by the same Spirit who now is at work in us to bring us to resurrection with Him.’

November 27 2017 Day 331 Readings Daniel 4:1-37, 2 Peter 1:1-21, Psalm 119:97-112, Proverbs 28:17-18

אֲתוּהִי כְמֹה רַב־רַבִּין וְתִמְהוּהִי כְמֹה תִקִּיפִין מַלְכוּתָהּ מַלְכוּת עַלְמֵי שְׁלִטְנָה עַם-דָּר וְדָר
Atohi kemàh rabhrehhìn, ve-timhohì kemàh taqiphìn; malkhutèh malkhùt alàm, ve-shaltanèh im dar ve-dàr.

(Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar speaks in praise of the LORD)

‘His signs are so very great and his wonders are so mighty; His kingship is a kingship that has no limits and He governs from generation to generation.’

Daniel 4v3/ דניאל ג"ל

A reflection on Daniel 4.3: ‘In Nebuchadnezzar’s testimony, we see the Babylonian King restored to his throne, but with a very different perception of his own role. This is why he says, Praise and honor the King who rules from heaven! Everything he does is honest and fair, and he can shatter the power of those who are proud. His period of suffering has changed his view of life completely; he now realizes the fragility of human power and the source of his rule in God.’

λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ Θεοῦ πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιαῦσα ἐπὶ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, εἰς ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα·

Labhòn gar parà Theòu patròs timèe kai dhòxan phonèes enechthèesees avtò tiàsdeh ypò tees meghaloprepòus dhòxees, ‘Òu-tòs-estin o yiòs-mou o aghapeetòs, ees òn eghò evdhòkeesa.’ For in receiving honour and glory from God the Father, there came such a loud voice with the full weight of His magnificence, saying ‘This is my beloved son, in whom I take delight.’

2 Peter/Πετροῦ Β 1.17

A reflection on 2 Peter 1.17 ‘ Peter recounts the event of being with Jesus on the mountain where He was transformed before their eyes into His full radiance; he reminds his readers that the Father endorsed loudly from the skies His Son’s identity, not first as Saviour of the world or as Messiah, but as His beloved Son, in whom He takes pleasure. We, like Jesus, do not derive our identity from our service or our gift, but from the irrevocable right He has given us to be called children of this delighted Father! (John 1.12)’

November 28 2017 Day 332 Readings Daniel 5:1-31, 2 Peter 2:1-22, Psalm 119:113-128, Proverbs 28:19-20

οὗτοί εἰσι πηγαὶ ἄνυδροι, νεφέλαι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος ἐλαυνόμεναι, οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκοτίους εἰς αἰῶνα τετήρηται.

Outì-eesi peeyài ànydhri, nephèlai ypò lailàpos elavnòmeni, èes o zòphos tou skòtous ees aiòna tetèreetai.

There are waterless wells, clouds driven about in a storm, for whom the gloom of ages in darkness is stored up.

2 Peter/Πετροῦ Β 2.17

A reflection on 2 Peter 2.17 ‘Peter is clear about those who mislead others posing as God’s representatives. They are not endorsed by God, but more than that, they have no connection to the Living Water, blown about aimlessly by changing fashions and fads. All they produce is confusion and darkness. Peter wants to warn his readers to steer clear of those who promote their own strange spiritualities in opposition to Christ.’

סתרִי ומגִנִי אַתָּה לְדַבְרֶךָ יְהוָה

Sitrì u-maginì àttah, lid-bharkhà yichàlti

My hiding place and shield are You, on Your word I depend.

Psalm 119.114/תהילים קיד"ק"ט

A reflection on Psalm 119.114 ‘The Singer says so much in so few words; the Lord is hiding-place, shield and hope, a dependable shelter whose Word is ever there. We have need of nothing more.’

November 29 2017 Day 333 Readings Daniel 6:1-28, 2 Peter 3:1-18, Psalm 119:129-152, Proverbs 28:21-22

מִן-קֹדְמֵי שַׁיִם טַעַם דִּי בְּכָל-שְׁלֹטָן מְלָכוּתֵי לְהוֹן זְעִין וְדַחַלִין מִן-קֹדָם אֱלֹהֵהּ דִּי-דַנְיָא לְ
דִּי-הוּא אֱלֹהֵהּ חַיָּא וְקַיָּים לְעַלְמִין וּמְלָכוּתֵהּ דִּי-לֹא תִתְחַבֵּל וְשְׁלֹטְנָהּ עַד-סוֹפָא

Min kodamài sim te'èm di be-khòl sholtàn malkhutì lehevòn za-ye'in ve-dachalìn min-kodàm Elahèh di-Dani'èl di hu Elahà chayyà ve-kayyàm le-alamìn u-malkhutèh di la tit-chabàl ve-sholtanèh ad-sophà

(King Darius writes)

From my presence, I enact a decree that in every realm of my kingdom every being should tremble and be in awe before the God of Daniel, for He is the God of life, dependable forever

and His kingdom cannot be overcome, for His rule is endless
Daniel 6v27/ דניאל ו"כז

A reflection on Daniel 6.27: 'The King issues a decree commanding 'fear and reverence' for the God of Daniel, the Rescuer. When God is placed in His rightful place in a nation, blessing and stability flow out from His being.'

αὐξάνετε δὲ ἐν χάριτι καὶ γνώσει τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ. αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος· ἀμήν.

Avxànete dhe en chàriti kai gnòsi tou Kyriou eemòn kai sotèeros, Yeèsou Christou; avtò ee dhòxa kai nyn kai ees eemèran aiònos, Amèen.

But increase in the grace and experience of our Lord and Rescuer, Messiah Jesus; may His be the magnificent honour both now and on through days without limit, Yes indeed!

2 Peter/Πετροῦ Β 3.18

A reflection on 2 Peter 3.18 'With the last few words of his letter, Peter urges his readers to increase in the grace and knowledge – that is, from the Jewish perspective, in experience, not just in theory – of Jesus. Since there is no limit to the grace of God, we can only grow in Him as we make more space in our lives for Him. Why would I not desire to grow in grace and experience of Jesus my Rescuer? Why would I not clear out the clutter to have more of His amazing person in residence in my being? Why would I hold onto my tat, when can I can share in His riches?'

November 30 2017 Day 334 Readings Daniel 7:1-28, 1 John 1:1-10, Psalm 119:153-176, Proverbs 28:23-24

וּמַלְכוּתָא וְשִׁלְטָנָא וְרַבּוּתָא דִּי מַלְכוּת תַּחֲוֹת כָּל-שְׁמַיָּא יְהִיבַת לְעַם קְדִישִׁי עַלְיוֹנִין
מַלְכוּתָהּ מַלְכוּת עֲלָם וְכָל שִׁלְטָנָא לֵיהּ יִפְלְחוּן וַיִּשְׁתַּמְעוּן

U-malkhutà ve-shaltanà u-revutà di malkhevàt techòt kol-shemayà yehivàt le-àm qaddishèy malkhutèy malkhùt alàm ve-khòl shaltanyà leh; yiphlechùn ve-yishtam'un

And the kingdom and the rule and the greatness of the Kingdom under all of heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High; His Kingdom is a Kingdom without limit, and all rule is His, they will serve Him and listen to Him.

Daniel 7v27/ דניאל ז"כז

A reflection on Daniel 7.27: 'These prophecies of Daniel point to a coming persecution of God's people, but with an ensuing vindication and establishment of a kingdom of God which will have no end. This undoubtedly refers to the Messiah Himself, Jesus Christ, who is the 'son of man' coming to receive the glory of the Ancient of Days in 7.14.'

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶ καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.

Kai avtèe estin ee angelia een akeekòamen ap-avtòu kai anangèlomen ymìn, òti o Theòs phòs-esti kai skotìa en avtò ouk èstin oudhemìa.

And this is the message than we heard from Him and announce again to you, that God is light, and there is no trace of darkness in Him.

1 John/Ἰωαννου Α 1.5

A reflection on 1 John 1.5 'The first thing God does in His creation is speak light into being. For John, this is the very nature of God; in Him there is nothing covert, nothing hidden.

Without light, we stumble and are lost. God's light, His very nature, keeps us from the chaos of nothingness and holds us in life.'

רָאָה כִּי־פִקּוּדֶיךָ אֶהְבֵּתִי יְהוָה כְּחֶסֶדְךָ חַיְנִי

Re'eh ki phiququdèkha ahàbhti; Adonài ke-chasdèkha chayèyni.

See how I love your instructions; Lord, make me alive with Your covenant-bonded grace.

Psalm 119.159/קנט"קיט תהילים

A reflection on Psalm 119.159 'As the Singer brings to a close this, the longest of the Scriptures' songs, he reminds the Lord of his love for the formation He gives. This divine shaping of our being brings us life and leads us into the experience of the grace bound by the covenant which never fails.'

December 1 2017 Day 335 Readings Daniel 8:1-27, 1 John 2:1-17, Psalm 120:1-7, Proverbs 28:25-26

וְאֲנִי דָנִיֵּאל נִהְיֵיתִי וְנִחַלֵּיתִי יָמִים וְאֶקוּם וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת־מְלָאכֶת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאֶשְׁתּוֹמֵם עַל־הַמַּרְאֶה וְאִין מֵבִין

Va-anì Danièl nihyèyti ve-nechelèyti yamìm, va-e'esèh et-melèkhet ha-mèlekh, va-eshtomèm al ha-marèh ve-èyn meybhin.

Then I, Daniel, was despondent and ill for days, though I kept on doing the king's work while I was overwhelmed at what I had seen, which no one could understand.

Daniel 8.27/דניאל ח"כז

A reflection on Daniel 8.27 'Following expansive revelations from God about the future unfolding of history, Daniel is overwhelmed and despondent at what he sees; the fall of empires, the rise of Alexander the Great, the oppression of God's people by one who is bent on their harm, all this depresses him. In his faithfulness, he still continues to work for the king, but he is in a place of isolation; no one understands what he is going through. On days when we are overwhelmed, we can take courage from the fact that the Scripture depicts such times of hardship, but helps us to see that the Lord never leaves our side in the unrolling of His story with us.'

Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ·

Mee agapàte ton kòsmon meedè ta en to kòsmo; èàn tis agapà ton kòsmon, ouk èstin ee agàpee tou patròs en avtò.

Don't commit your affection to the world system, nor the things that system entails; if anyone gives themselves to the world system, the selfless love of the Father is not in them.

1 John/Ἰωαννου A 2.15

A reflection on 1 John 2.15 'On a number of occasions in his letter John uses the term 'the world' to sum up the kind of ungodliness we are meaning. The word he uses is kosmos, which comes from a Greek word meaning to order; John is not meaning the created earth, which belongs to the Lord. But he is meaning the world order, the republic of man, which he ends up by saying is under the tyranny of the evil one (5.19). For John, we are in the world, but not controlled by it (4.17) and through our faith we are overcoming the pull of the system. (5.4) However, he does make clear that Jesus has come to save this system from itself and transform it through His death on the cross and His resurrection to new life. '

December 2 2017 Day 336 Readings Daniel 9:1-10:21, 1 John 2:18-3:6, Psalm 121:1-8

Proverbs 28:27-28

וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶל-תְּפִלַּת עַבְדְּךָ וְאֶל-תַּחֲנוּנָיו וְהָאֵר פְּנֶיךָ עַל-מִקְדָּשְׁךָ הַשָּׁמֵם לְמַעַן אֲדַבְּרֶיךָ

Ve-attàh shemà, Elohèynu, el-tephilàt abhdekhà ve-èl tachnunàv, ve-ha'èr panèkha al-miqdàshkha ha-shomèm, lema'àn Adonài.

And now listen, our God, to the prayer of Your servant and to his pleas, and illuminate by Your presence-face Your dwelling place which is desolate, for the sake of the Lord

Daniel 9v17/ דניאל ט"ז

A reflection on Daniel 9.17: 'Daniel calls out to God for a new rescue, a new redemption, and a restoration of the Temple. He seeks the Lord's forgiveness, and the re-establishment of Jerusalem for the sake of the Lord's great glory. In this day of Messiah, how we need that new illumination of His face. So many are in darkness, ignorant of their destiny given by their Maker; like candles unlit, they await the spark of life to bring them alive to their true purpose in being.'

Ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα Θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ οὐπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα. οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῆ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστι.

Aghapitì, nyn tèkna Theou èsmen, kai oupo ephaneròthee ti esòmetha; ìdhamen dhe òti eàn phanerothèe, òmi-i avtò esòmetha, òti opsòmetha avtòn kathòs-esti.

Beloved, now we are the children of God and though it is not fully apparent what we will be like, we know that when He arrives, we shall be like Him, for we will see Him as He really is.

1 John/Ιωαννου 3.2

A reflection on 1 John 3.2 'John is very clear; even though we do not yet fully know what the final shape of our life with Jesus will be, we do not have to wait until we see Him to know that we are His Father's children here and now.'

December 3 2017 Day 337 Readings Daniel 11:1 -35, 1 John 3:7-24, Psalm 122:1-9, Proverbs 29:1

וְאֲנִי בַשָּׁנָה אַחַת לְדַרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּדִי--עָמַדְתִּי לְמַחְזִיק וּלְמַעֲזוֹ לוֹ

Va-anì bishnàt achàt le-Daryàvesh omdì le-machazìq u-le-maòz lo.

And in the first year of Darius, I took my place to strengthen and encourage him.

Daniel 11.1/א"א דניאל

A reflection on Daniel 11.1 'It is amazing how Daniel in his integrity before God is recognised and consulted by a series of Kings of different empires. Darius is a Mede, but Daniel offers himself in service to this new ruler; he gives himself to strengthen and encourage, an offer which any new ruler would welcome from a man of wisdom and experience.'

ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει. εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

O piòn teen amartian ek tou diabòlou estìn, òti ap'archèes o diàbolos amartàni. Ees tòuto ephaneròthee o yiòs tou Theou, ìna lýsee ta èrga tou diabòlou.

Whoever keeps on sinning is resourced by the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the outset. For this purpose the son of God was revealed, to release us from the actions of the devil.

1 John/Ιωαννου A 3.8

A reflection on 1 John 3.8 ‘John is very clear that those continuing to live in rebellion against God, leading to the failure and brokenness of their very humanity and divine destiny, are not acting independently, but are resourced by the personality of evil, the devil. Yet Jesus, the son of God, is able to break off the hold of this deceiving tyrant, pretender to God’s throne, so that we no longer have to live, held in the downward spiral of the devil’s despair and darkness.’

December 4 2017 Day 338 Readings Daniel 11:36-12:13, 1 John 4:1-21, Psalm 123:1-4, Proverbs 29:2-4

וְרַבִּים מִיִּשְׁנֵי אֲדָמַת-עֶפֶר יִקְיֹצוּ אֶלֶּה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם וְאֶלֶּה לְחַרְפּוֹת לְדָרְאוֹן עוֹלָם
Ve-rabim mi-yeshenèy admàt-aphàr yaqitzu, èleh le-chayèy olàm, ve-èleh le-charaphòt le-diròn olàm

And many sleeping in the dust of the earth will awake, some to life without limit, and some to reproach and contempt without limit

Daniel 12v2/ דניאל יב"ב

A reflection on Daniel 12.2: ‘The last chapter of Daniel seems to be looking far into the future, to the end. The words are addressed to Israel, whose protector is Michael (Heb ‘Mi-kha-el’, meaning, Who is like God?) a spiritual being called a prince. Here is a clear reference to a resurrection of the dead and everlasting life or judgement. Here is a closing vision of a life lived in eternal light, at which the shining man brings the words to a close, and draws a veil over the book.’

φόβος οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, ἀλλ’ ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον, ὅτι ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει· ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τετελείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ.

Phòbhos ouk èstin en tee aghàpee, all ee telèia aghàpee èxo bhàllee ton phòbhon, òti o phòbhos kòlasin èchi; o dhe phobhòumenos ou tetelèiotai en tee aghàpee.

There is no terror in love, for complete love expels fear, since fear implies harm; so the one who lives in fear has not yet been made whole by love.

1 John/Ἰωαννου Α 4.18

A reflection on 1 John 4.18 ‘Fear and phobia are a crippling force in people’s lives; but John says that the more we yield to God’s self-sacrificial love in us, the more fear ebbs away. As we increase in the realisation of the Father’s open heart towards us, evidenced by the selfless sacrifice of Jesus His Son, we drive out the powers that use fear as weapon against us.’

December 5 2017 Day 339 Readings Hosea 1:1-3:5, 1 John 5:1-21, Psalm 124:1-8, Proverbs 29:5-8

וְאֲרַשְׁתִּיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם וְאֲרַשְׁתִּיךָ לִי בְצַדֵּק וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים וְאֲרַשְׁתִּיךָ לִי בְאֵמוּנָה וְיָדַעַת אֶת-יְהוָה

Ve-erasstikh li le-olàm, ve-erasstikh li be-tzèdeq u-bhe-mìshpat u-bhe-chèsed u-bhe-rechamim, ve-erasstikh li be-emunàh, ve-yadà’ti et-Adonài

And I will betroth you to myself forever, and I will betroth you to me with integrity and equity, with covenant–bonded grace and with compassion, and I will betroth you to me with faithfulness, and you will intimately know the LORD

Hosea 2.19,20/ הושע ב"יט כ

A reflection on Hosea 2.19-20 ‘Hosea is called to live out in his human marriage with his beloved yet unfaithful wife, Gomer, the drama of covenant-breaking and adultery which Israel and Judah have played out with the Lord over the years of His wooing them. Yet the promise is that God will not give up on them, and there is a day coming when all the beauty and integrity of God will break upon them and they will ‘*know*’ – that is, they will ‘*experience*’ the Lord; the Hebrew word here cannot be just a head-thing, it must also be a real encounter with a real person.’

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ Θεός, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.

Kai avtèe estin ee martyria, òti zoèn aiònion èdhoken eemìn o Theòs, kai avtèe ee zoèe en to yiò avtòu-estin.

And this is on record, that God has given us life unlimited, and this life is in His Son.

1 John/Ἰωαννου A 5.11

A reflection on 1 John 5.11 ‘We do not just have a vague hope that life is given us by God through His Son Jesus; we have the evidence, the testimony of His life, His death, His resurrection and ascension, which are on record and certify to us that because He has come, we now have life without limit, agelessly grafted into Messiah Jesus, who is our Lover and Rescuer. The only way to be sure of that life is to yield our being to Him in worship and relationship.’

December 6 2017 Day 340 Readings Hosea 4:1-5:15, 2 John 1:1-13, Psalm 125:1-5, Proverbs 29:9-11

שמעו דבר-יהוה בני ישראל כי ריב ליהוה עם-יושבי הארץ--כי אין-אמת ואין-חסד ואין-
דעת אלהים בארץ

Shime’ù debhàr Adonài benèy Yisra’èl ki reebh l’Adonài im yoshebhèy ha-àretz ki eyn èmet ve-èyn chèsed ve-èyn da’at Elohim ba-àretz.

Sons of Israel, listen to the word of the Lord, because He has an issue with those dwelling in the land, for there is no integrity, no covenant-bonded grace and no experience of God in the land.

[Hosea 4.1/הושע ד"א](#)

A reflection on Hosea 4.1 ‘Implicated in the issue which the Lord has with his people is the fact that they just don’t know Him – there is no encounter, no experience of the Lord. This is not about a lack of knowledge about God; the word ‘know’ here has the sense of ‘*connaitre*’ in French or ‘*kennen*’ in German, knowing the person, not the facts. The measure of the quality of our walk with the Lord is how close we are to His face and how clearly we are hearing His voice.’

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, ἵνα περιπατῶμεν κατὰ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ. αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολή, καθὼς ἠκούσατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ περιπατῆτε.

Kai avtèe estin ee agàpee, ìna peripatòmen katà tas endolàs avtòu. Avtèe-estin ee endolèe, kathòs eekòusate ap’archèes, ìna en avtèe peripatèete.

And this is love, that we behave according to His directives. And this is the directive you have heard from the outset, so that you can live by it.

2 John/Ἰωαννου B 1.6

A reflection on 2 John 1.6 ‘Love has an outflow in response; love does not do its own thing, but yields to the beloved. God’s directive to love leads to a lifestyle of care and compassion,

not just an occasional good deed in the midst of an otherwise selfish existence. God's Torah life-rule is not to gate us, but us liberate us to love Him and one another.'

December 7 2017 Day 341 Readings Hosea 6:1-9:17, 3 John 1:1-15, Psalm 126:1-6, Proverbs 29:12-14

באו ימי הפקדה באו ימי השלם ידעו ישראל אויל הנביא משגע איש הרוח על רב עונך
ורבה משטמה

Ba-ù yemèy ha-phequdàh, ba-ù yemèy ha-shilèm, yeda'ù Yisra'èl; evil ha-nàbhi, meshuggàh ish ha-rùach al-ròbh avonkhà ve-rabbàh mastemàh.

The days of reckoning are coming, the days of payback, let Israel know; the prophet is called 'fool' and the man of the Spirit is called 'a madman' because of the weight of your sin and the extent of your prejudice

Hosea 9v7/ז"ט הושע

A reflection on Hosea 9.7 'When prophets are called idiots and Spirit-filled people are called 'meshuggah'(mad), it's time to think that tolerance has finished and prejudice has taken over. God will not fail to vindicate his people, says Hosea, who witness to His love and justice in the face of rejection.'

Πολλὰ εἶχον γράφειν, ἀλλ' οὐ θέλω διὰ μέλανος καὶ καλάμου σοι
γράψαι· ἐλπίζω δὲ εὐθέως σε ἰδεῖν σε, καὶ στόμα πρὸς στόμα λαλήσομεν.
Pollà èechon gràphin, all' òu thèlo dhìa mèlanos kai kalàmou si gràpsai; elpizo dhe evthèos se
idhìn se, kai stòma pros stòma lalèesomen.

I did have a lot of things to write, but I would rather not express them in pen and ink; instead, I am hoping to see you shortly, and we can talk face to face.

3 John/Ἰωαννου Γ 1.13,14

A reflection on 3 John 1.13,14 'In days when written communications are ten a penny, and texts and emails land in flights in our laps, we might perhaps take note of the value the apostle John places on face-to-face contact. (The Greek in fact has it as 'mouth-to-mouth', conveying the intimate nature of vocal connection.) Paul at one point expresses his frustration at his written words not being able to carry the tone of his voice (Gal.4.20). No doubt, when John saw his readers, they were gladder at hearing his words spoken than if they had seen them in ink.'

December 8 2017 Day 342 Readings Hosea 10:1-14:9, Jude 1:1-25, Psalm 127:1-5, Proverbs 29:15-17

זרעו לכם לצדקה קצרו לפי-חסד נירו לכם ניר ועת לדרוש את-יהוה עד-יבוא נירה צדק
לכם

Zir'ù lakhèm li-tzedaqàh, qitzrù le-phì chèsed, nirù lakhèm nir, ve-èt lidròsh et-Adonài ad yabhò ve-yorèh tzèdeq lakhèm.

Sow for yourselves with integrity, harvest with covenant-bonded grace, plough up the fallow ground, for it's time to pursue the LORD until He comes and waters you with righteousness.

Hosea 10v12/י"ב הושע

A reflection on Hosea 10.12 ‘Israel understands agricultural language; it is part of their national culture. The Lord is speaking through Hosea here the need to apply the principles of sowing and reaping to their daily lives and heart-attitudes. Sowing with integrity means taking actions which produce wholeness and not underhanded dealing. Reaping covenant grace means living faithful to God and the community around, so that constancy becomes an everyday feature of life. This will be facilitated by pursuing relationship with the Lord, who will respond by pouring blessing upon His people like showers of rain.’

Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ φυλάξαι ὑμᾶς ἀπταιστους καὶ στῆσαι κατενώπιον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἀμόμους ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει, μόνῳ σοφῷ Θεῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν, δόξα μεγαλωσύνη, κράτος καὶ ἐξουσία καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

To dhe dhynamèno phylàxi ymàs aptàistous kai stèesai katenòpion tees dhòxees avtòu amòmous en agalliàsi, mònò sophò Theò sotèeri eemòn, dhòxa meghalosýnee, kràtos kai exousia kai nyn kai ees pàndas tous aiònas; amèn.

So to the One who has the power to keep you from falling and to deliver you, still standing and spotless before His magnificence in joyful celebration, to the only wise God our rescuer be glory and splendour, power and authority, now and through endless ages, Amen.

Jude/Ιουδα 24,25

A reflection on Jude 24,25 ‘Judas, half-brother of Jesus, brother of James, often identified with the disciple Thaddeus, ends his short letter with a shining benediction, committing the believers, his readers, to the only wise God who has the power to keep them standing in faith. The life of an apprentice of Jesus, which a believer commits to, is not lived by human strength, but by divine power, and will end in celebration at the finishing line before His face in an unlimited life with Him!’

December 9 2017 Day 343 Readings Joel 1:1-3:21, Revelation 1:1-20, Psalm 128:1-6, Proverbs 29:18

וקרעו לבבכם ואל-בגדיכם ושובו אל-יהוה אלהיכם כי-חנן ורחום הוא ארץ אפים ורב-חסד ונחם על-הרעה

Ve-qir’ù lebhàbhkhem ve-lò bigdèykhem, ve-shùbhu el-Adonài Elohèykhem, ki channùn ve-rachùm hu, èrech apàyim ve-rabh chèsed, ve-nichàm al ha-ra’à.

Tear your hearts, not your clothes, and come back to the LORD your God, for He favours you and He is compassionate, slow to get angry and big on covenant-bonded grace, turning away from doing harm.

Joel 2v13/כ"ו י"ל מלכים ב

A reflection on Joel 2.13 ‘Joel recalls Israel to their first love, reminding them of the character and nature of God revealed to Moses in Exodus 34.6-7. It is he who speaks of the promise of the immersion of God’s people in His Holy Spirit which Peter quotes on the day of Pentecost; down the corridors of time, Joel sees a time of God’s abiding presence coming permanently to His people.’

Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, λέγει Κύριος ὁ Θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

Egò eemi to Àlpha kai to O-mèga, lèyee Kýrios o Theòs, o on kai o een kai o erchòmenos, o pandokràtor.

I am the A and the Z, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who will be, the All-powerful One.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 1.8

A reflection on Revelation 1.8 ‘God is here described as the ‘Alpha and Omega’, the A and ‘big O’ which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, the one whose existence out-exists every other being, and who has all power and rule, (Greek, o pantokrátor), the Almighty.’

אֲשֶׁרֵי כָל-יְרָא יְהוָה הֵהֱלֵךְ בְּדַרְכָּיו

Ashrèy kol yerèy Adonài, ha-holèykh bidrakhàv.

Contentment comes to everyone in awe of the Lord, who walks in His ways.

Psalm 128.1/תהילים קכח"א

A reflection on Psalm 128.1 ‘This song of Israel is full of the joy of contentment in God when those who live in awe of Him walk in His ways; fruitfulness, love, family and future heritage, all flow from living relationship with the One who provides humankind with all good things out of His generous heart.’

בְּאֵין חֲזוֹן יִפְרַע עַם וְשֹׁמֵר תּוֹרַת אֲשֶׁרֶהוּ

Be-èyn chazòn yipporà am, ve-shòmer toràh ashrey-hù

Without revelation, people are lost, but keeping to *Torah's* rule of life brings contentment.

Proverbs 29v18/משלי כט"ח

A reflection on Prov.29.18 ‘When people make up their own ethical code as they go along, the outcome is a ‘pop’ morality which has no authority or continuous narrative in it, as competing opinions strive to win out over one another. In the unfolding of God’s revelation through Scripture and in the adhering to its rhythm and rule of life comes a meaning and an understanding of life which brings satisfaction and contentment. Without it, the Poet says in Proverbs, all is lost.’

December 10 2017 Day 344 Readings Amos 1:1-3:15, Revelation 2:1-17, Psalm 129:1-8, Proverbs 29:19-20

כִּי לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה דְּבַר כִּי אִם-גְּלָהּ סוֹדוֹ אֶל-עַבְדָּיו הַנְּבִיאִים

Ki lo ya-asèh Adonài Elohim dabhàr ki im galàh sodò el-abhadàyv, ha-nebhi'im

For the the Lord God will not do a thing unless He has revealed His counsel to His servants, the prophets.

עֲמוֹס ג'ז"ז/Amos 3v7

A reflection on Amos 3.7 ‘Because the people of Israel, back in Exodus 20.19 chose not to hear God, wanting His word to be mediated to them through human agency, the Lord makes sure that they hear Him through His envoys, the prophets. God is a speaking God, more ready to speak than we are to listen. In these days of the age of the Spirit, however, since the day of Pentecost, all the people of God have been given access directly to the face of God in Christ; we may now all know Him, no longer needing mediated revelation. Rather, through the power and presence of His Spirit, all of Jesus’ people are prophetic now.’

ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ, ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφήκας.

All' ècho katà sou, òti teen aghàpeed sou teen pròteen aphèekas.

But I have this against you, that you have abandoned your original love.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 2.4

A reflection on Revelation 2.4 ‘The Spirit’s word to the assembly in Ephesus acknowledges all their hard work and their stickability, as well as their sound doctrine, but highlights what is missing – their original passion for Jesus. It is so sadly possible to be active and busy for the Lord and the church, but missing the one thing which gives life to it all, the closeness of God’s face, the kisses of His lips.’

December 11 2017 Day 345 Readings Amos 4:1-6:14, Revelation 2:18-3:6, Psalm 130:1-8, Proverbs 29:21-22

דַּרְשׁוּ-טוֹב וְאַל-רָע לְמַעַן תַּחְיוּ וְיֵהֱ-כֵן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-צְבָאוֹת אֲתֹכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם
Dirshù tobh ve-àl ra, le-ma’àn tichyù, vi-yehì khen Adonài Elohèy tzebha’òt itkhèm ka-ashèr amartèm

Pursue good and not evil, so that you will live, and thus the LORD God of armies will be with you, as you claim.

עמוס ה"ד/Amos 5v14

A reflection on Amos 5.14 ‘It is a simple expectation God has of us – pursue and go after good; this leads to life. And yet, in inexplicable perversity, humanity has turned its will to pursue evil, which results in death. Good is the characteristic at the heart of God’s being, so when good is our goal, the Lord of Hosts, God Himself, will be with us. Doing evil shuts us off from relationship with the Lord.’

‘Ο ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

O èchon oos akousàto ti to Pnèvma lèyi tais ekkleesiàis.

Whoever has ears, let them listen to what the Spirit is saying to the assemblies.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 3.6

A reflection on Revelation 3.6 ‘Without the voice of the Spirit, the people of God become an empty vessel, like a lamp with no flame or a body with no breath. We need His constant filling, His daily communication with us to see earth filled with His glory as the waters cover the seas.’

December 12 2017 Day 346 Readings Amos 7:1-9:15, Revelation 3:7-22, Psalm 131:1-3, Proverbs 29:23

וּבֵית-אֵל לֹא-תוֹסִיף עוֹד לְהַנְבֵּא כִּי מִקְדָּשׁ-מֶלֶךְ הוּא וּבֵית מַמְלַכָּה הוּא
U-bhey-t-Èl lo tosi-ph od le-hinnabhè, ki miqdàsh mèlekh hu u-bhèyt mamlakhàh hu
As for Bethel, don’t prophesy there any more, because it is the king’s sanctuary and property of the state.

עמוס ז"ג/Amos 7v13

A reflection on Amos 7.13 ‘While Jeroboam of Israel has hijacked the worship of the Lord to his political ends by setting up his pseudo-gods in Bethel and Dan, in 2 Chron.26.16ff, Azariah and eighty faithful others of the Lord’s priests in Israel actively resist Uzziah of Judah from taking on himself the rites of priesthood, God chastising him severely for his presumption. When politics intrudes on holy ground, when the temple of God becomes the property of the state, the glory of the Lord is marginalised in the quest for human power and control. No wonder God puts Uzziah in his place so uncompromisingly. We need to beware the ideology of any human institution co-opting to itself the place of God and resist it, as Azariah resisted Uzziah. Jesus tells us to ‘give Caesar what is Caesar’s, give God what is God’s.’”

ἰδοὺ ἔστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἔάν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν, εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ δειπνήσω μετ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ’ ἐμοῦ.

Idhòu èsteeka epì tees thýran kai kròu-o; èàn tis akòusee tees phonèes mou kai anìxee teen thýran, eeselèvsomai pros avtòn kai dhipnèeso met-avtòu kai avtòs met’emòu.

Look, I am standing at the door and knocking; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to them, and have a meal with them and they with me.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 3.20

A reflection on Revelation 3.20 ‘Although this verse about Jesus knocking at the door has often been seconded to serve as an appeal to non-believers to respond to Jesus, the intended addressees of this appeal are the Laodicean Jesus-assembly, whose mediocrity and absence of passion marks them out as the most sharply corrected of the seven churches. They have an opportunity to bring Jesus back into the centre of their common life, by recognising their rank poverty without Him there, thus receiving His precious antidote to their lack.’

December 13 2017 Day 347 Readings Obadiah 1:1-21, Revelation 4:1-11, Psalm 132:1-18, Proverbs 29:24-25

וְבָהָר צִיּוֹן תִּהְיֶה פְּלִיטָה וְהָיָה קֹדֶשׁ וַיְרָשׁוּ בֵּית יַעֲקֹב אֶת מוֹרְשֵׁיהֶם

U-bhe-hàr Tziyòn tihyèh pheleytâh ve-hayàh qòdesh ve-yorshù beyt Ya’aqòbh et morashèyhem.

But on Mount Zion there will be rescue, and there will be holiness and the house of Jacob will inherit their possessions.

עוֹבַדְיָה v17/ז'

A reflection on Obadiah 17 ‘The core of Obadiah’s message is addressing the unfaithfulness of Judah’s neighbour, Edom, descendants of Jacob’s brother, Esau; they have not only declared independence from Judah, but are aiding their enemies. Yet those who touch the Lord’s people find He defends and vindicates them, not because of their worth or righteousness, but because of His covenant-bonded grace towards them. Their holiness is not because of their deeds, but because of His call. In His shelter is their safe place of rescue.’

ἄξιός ἐστίν, ὁ Κύριος καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα, καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημά σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

Àxios ee o Kýrios kai o Theòs eemòn, labhèen teen dhòxan kai teen timèen kai teen dhýnamin, òti see èktisas ta pànda, kai dhià to thèleema sou èesan kai ektìstheesan.

You are worthy, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created everything, all of it coming into existence and created by Your intention.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 4.11

A reflection on Revelation 4.11 ‘As John is shown the full magnificence of the throneroom of God, he finds himself in a place of expression, movement and noise; worship is sweeping across the place incessantly, with winged creatures soaring through the air, crying ‘Holy!’ and elders falling facedown, laying crowns down before Him, declaring how much He deserves all praise and celebration, because all of creation, all this vast story, has come about not by a whim but by an intention, God’s intention. Creation is an intentional realm, the fruit of a creative God.’

December 14 2017 Day 348 Reading Jonah 1:1-4:11, Revelation 5:1-14, Psalm 133:1-3, Proverbs 29:26-27

מְשֻׁמְרִים הַבְּלִי-שׁוֹא חֲסִדִּים יַעֲזֹבוּ.

Meshamrìim haveley-shàv chasdàm ya'zòvu

Those who stick with futile sham forfeit the integrity of covenant-bonded grace which could be theirs

יונה ב"ח/2v8

A reflection on Jonah 2.8 ‘Jonah has been in danger of forfeiting himself the fruits of the Lord’s covenant-bonded grace towards him by clinging to his rebellion. Now, in the depths of the fish, he cries out to God in repentance, and appeals to the faithfulness of the Lord, even though Jonah himself has been unfaithful. God, who is rich in that committed, loving dependability rescues him, and through him, Nineveh too. God’s heart is set on rescue, not destruction.’

καὶ ἄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν λέγοντες· ἄξιός εἰ λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς σφραγιδας αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσφάγης καὶ ἠγόρασας τῷ Θεῷ ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους, καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Kai àdhousin odhèn kainèn lèghondes, ‘Àxios ee labhìn to bhibhlion kai anixai tas sphrayidhas avtòu, òti esphàyees kai eegòreesas to Theò eemàs en to àimatì-sou ek pàsees phylèes kai glòssees kai laòu kai èthnous, kai epìeesas avtòus to Theò eemòn bhasilèes kai erèes, kai bhasilèvousin epì tees yees.’

And they sang a new song, saying ‘Worthy are you to take the book and to undo its seals, for you were slaughtered and bought us for God with Your blood out of every clan and language and people-group and nation, and have made them into kings and priests for our God and they will reign on earth.’

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 5.9,10

A reflection on Revelation 5.9,10 ‘The Lamb is revealed to be the key to all history, the One who can make sense of the closed book and by whose death the redemption of mankind has been achieved. What is also revealed is that God is not intending to sit in absolute power over the new heaven and new earth, but is delegating His reign through His redeemed people, to mediate and represent His loving will to the earth. Song breaks out at the realisation of the majesty of the whole plan of God’s rescue of the earth through the Messiah-Lamb; we are invited to join in that song today!’

הִנֵּה מַה-טוֹב וְיָמָה-נְעִים / שְׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם-יחד

Hinèh mah tobh u-màh nayìm, shèbhet achìm gam yàchad.

Look at what a good thing it is and how delightful, when brothers live together as one.

תהילים קלג"א/133.1

A reflection on Psalm 133.1 ‘The mark of the republic of man is enmity, people at odds with people, set against one another in ceaseless struggle for self-realisation. But where God brings brothers together under His forever Fatherhood, in unity and self-giving and forgiving, good things happen and hope ensues. This is where the blessing of God’s kingship comes, as love breaks in against the disease of hatred.’

December 15 2017 Day 349 Readings Micah 1:1-4:13, Revelation 6:1-17, Psalm 134:1-3, Proverbs 30:1-4

לו-איש הולך רוח ושקר כזב אטף לה ליינו ולשקר והיה מטיף העם הזה

Lu ish holèkh rùach va-shèqer, kizzèbh attìph lekhà la-yàyin ve-la-shekhàr, ve-hayàh mattìph ha-àm ha-zèh

(Micah expresses the LORD's unhappiness with false prophets)

If someone comes to you full of wind and rubbish, burbling lying promises to you about wine and liquor, he somehow turns into a guru for this people

מיכה ב"א יא/ Micah 2v11

A reflection on Micah 2.11 'It is amazing how fickle people can be, and how easily led en masse into error. Despite the Lord's having proved His commitment and love to their nation many times, Israel rejects Him for any burbling charlatan who calls himself a prophet and promises them a good time. Only the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, speaks with a spiritual authority evidenced by millennia of faithfulness and love in action towards His people. All else is froth.'

והלכו גוים רבים ואמרו לכו ונעלה אל-הר-יהוה ואל-בית אלהי יעקב ויורנו מדרכיו

ונלכה בארחתיו כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר-יהוה מירושלם

Ve-halkhù goyìim rabbìim ve-omrù, 'Lekhù, ve-na'alèh el-hàr Adonài ve-el-bèyt Elohèy

Ya'aqòbh ve-yorènu mi-derakhàyv ve-nelkhàh be-orchotàyv, ki mi-Tziyòn tetzèh toràh u-debhàr Adonài mi-Yerushalàyim.'

And many nations will travel, saying, 'Come on, let's go to the LORD's hill and to the house of the God of Jacob and let's learn His ways and walk in His paths, for from Zion will go out the Torah rule of life and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (city of peace).'

מיכה ד"ב/ Micah 4v2

A reflection on Micah 4.2 'However we interpret it, the importance of the land of Israel to billions of the world's population as the focus of the historical element of their faith is obvious. And yet, there is a wider frame of reference than just physical to the terms 'the Lord's hill' and 'Zion', so that people do not have to travel bodily to a land to find the God of Jacob. Zion is the place where God dwells, and since the Holy Spirit came to abide in His people, God's city is spread across the planet, wherever His Spirit is active.'

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὴν πέμπτην σφραγίδα, εἶδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον.

Kai òte ènixe teen pèmpteen sphrayìdha, èdhon ypokàto tou thysiastyriou tas psychàs ton esphagmènon dhià ton lògon tou Theou kai dhià teen martyriàn een èchon.

And when He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those killed because of the word of God and for the record of faith which was theirs.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 6.9

A reflection on Revelation 6.9 'As the cataclysm unfolds with the unravelling of history, John sees the martyrs who call out to God for vindication from under His altar. So many are still murdered because of their love of Jesus Christ, Word of God. The record of their faith is held in God's presence, and their constancy serves still for our example.'

December 16 2017 Day 350 Readings Micah 5:1-7:20, Revelation 7:1-17, Psalm 135:1-21, Proverbs 30:5-6

מי-אל כמוך נשא עון ועבר על-פשע לשארית נחלתו לא-החזיק לעד אפו כי-חפץ

חסד הוא.

Mi El ka-mòkha , nossè' avòn ve-obhèr peshà' lisherit nachaltò lo-he-cheziq la-àd appò ki chàphets chèsed hu

Who is a God like you, bearing sin and covering failure to the remnant of his inheritance? He does not nurture his anger for always, for he delights in covenant commitment

מיכה ז"ח/ Micah 7.18

A reflection on Micah 7.18 ‘Throughout Israel’s years of rebellion and waywardness, God would not give up on her. Putting her through even the pain and distress of exile, the Lord has not reneged on His promise, but has Himself come and offered His Son as the covenant sacrifice that makes a way for Israel and the nations to find the blessing promised to Abraham.’

ὅτι τὸ ἀρνίον τὸ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ θρόνου ποιμανεῖ αὐτούς, καὶ ὀδηγήσει αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ ζωῆς πηγᾶς ὑδάτων, καὶ ἐξαλείψει ὁ Θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

Òti to arnion to anà mèson tou thrònou pimanèe avtòus, kai odheeyèsee avtòus epì zoèes peegàs ydhàton, kai exalìpsi o Theòs pan dhàkryon ek ton ophthalmòn avtòn.

For the Lamb in the centre of the throne will shepherd them, and He will guide them to the living water-springs and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 7.17

A reflection on Revelation 7.17 ‘One of the elders asks John if he knows who the people in white are. John asks to know, and is told that these are the overcomers, the ones who have persevered through the great Suffering (Greek ‘ee thlípsis ee meghálee’), and have washed their robes in the blood of Christ, out of which they come white, not red. These yielded ones will be in God’s home, at His throne, supplied and protected, the Lamb of God their shepherd and comfort.’

הללו-יהוה כִּי-טוֹב יְהוָה זָמְרוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ כִּי נָעִים

Hallelù Yàh, ki tobh Adonài; zamrù li-shmò ki nayìm.

Celebrate the Lord, for He is good; make music to His name, for it is a delight!

תהילים קלה"ג/ Psalm 135.3

A reflection on Psalm 135.3 ‘The Scriptures present a picture of praise to the Lord which is joyfully celebratory, musical and delightful; if God’s praise is a chore to us, we are probably not following the directions correctly.’

December 17 2017 Day 351 Readings Nahum 1:1-3:19, Revelation 8:1-13, Psalm 136:1-26, Proverbs 30:7-9

טוֹב יְהוָה לְמַעַז בְּיוֹם צָרָה וַיֹּדַע חֲסִי בּוֹ

Tov Adonài, le-ma'òz be-yòm tzaràh ve-yodèa chòsey bho

Good is the LORD, a fortress in the day of trouble and He knows those trusting in Him

Nahum 1v7/ נחום א"ז

A reflection on Nahum 1.7 ‘To be known by the Lord is an incomparable treasure. Knowing someone, in the Hebrew understanding, is not just being acquainted with them, but having experience of them, deeply entwined in their lived sense, the Lord knows us, our breathing, our thinking, our motivations. In times when we go through the rapids, He is in the boat with us and holding on to us.’

καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς τῶν θυμιαμάτων ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Kai anèbhee o kapnòs ton thymiamàton tais prosevchàis ton ayìon ek cheeròs tou angèlou enòpion tou Theòu.

And the smoke from the incense went up with the prayers of the holy ones from the hand of the angel before God.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 8.4

A reflection on Revelation 8.4 ‘John in his vision sees the prayer of God’s people rising with pungent incense before God’s face, gathered up by the angel. We perhaps do not see fully the spiritual dynamic and key part prayer takes in the unfolding of God’s story, but every indication in Scripture, here and elsewhere, is that our prayer, our engagement with the Lord in His shaping of the world is vital to the moving forward of His intention.’

December 18 2017 Day 352 Readings Habakkuk 1:1-3:19, Revelation 9:1-21, Psalm 137:1-9, Proverbs 30:10

כִּי תִמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ יְדַעַת אֶת-כְּבוֹד יְהוָה כַּמַּיִם יִכְסּוּ עַל-יָם.

Ki timmalèy ha-àretz la-da-àt et-kabhòd Adonài ka-màyim yekhasù al-yàm

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea

Habakkuk 2v14/ חֲבַקּוּק ב"ד

A reflection on Habakkuk 2.14 ‘Habakkuk speaks of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord filling the earth as the waters cover the sea. The word ‘knowledge’ in Hebrew is a dynamic, not a theoretical word; it is knowing by experience, a word of encounter. The prophet is envisaging a time when the full import and gravity of God’s reality is experienced across the world, transforming the whole creation into what it was meant to be. For this, the Kingdom of God is coming.’

καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἳ οὐκ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν ταῖς πληγαῖς ταύταις, οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσουσι τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ χρυσᾶ καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα, ἃ οὔτε βλέπειν δύνανται οὔτε ἀκούειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν.

Kai i lipèe ton anthròpon, i ouk apektàntheesan en tes pleegàis, tàvtais, ou metenòeesan ek ton èrgon ton cheeròn avtòn, ìna mee proskynèesousi ta dhaimònia kai ta ìdola ta chrysà kai ta argyrà kai ta chalkà kai ta lithina kai ta xýlina, a òute vlèpin dhýnandai òute akòuin òute peripatèen.

And the remainder of mankind, which had not been wiped out in these calamities, still did not change their mindsets away from their manufacturing, so as not to lavish their devotion on non-gods and on totems of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which have no power of sight, nor hearing nor progress.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 9.20

A reflection on Revelation 9.20 ‘Despite the affliction and terror that these cataclysms bring, humankind not marked with God’s mark are not prepared to change their ways. They go on with idolatry and materialism – worshipping what does not ‘see, hear or walk’ – and with violence, occult, sexual promiscuity and robbery.’

עַל נְהָרוֹת בְּבֶל שָׁם יִשְׁבְּנוּ גַם-בְּכִינוּ בְּזַכְרֵנוּ אֶת-צִיּוֹן

Al naharòt Babbhèl, sham yashàbhnu, gam bakhìnu be-zokhrèynu et-Tziyòn
Beside the streams of Babylon, there we sat, even wept in our remembering Zion
תהילים קלז"א / Psalm 137v1/

A reflection on Psalm 137.1: ‘This Psalm of lament is one of the best known of the songs in exile. It speaks of the pain of a forcibly transported community, looking back on what they have lost. Although their oppressors want to benefit from their cultural heritage, and want to hear some of their ‘songs of Zion’, these songs are sung in connection with the Temple, which has been destroyed. How can songs be sung without a place to sing them? Yet in the midst of their pain, God will allow their song to echo through Babylon and eventually bless the whole earth through the coming of Messiah Jesus.’

אל-תלשן עבד אל-אדננו פן-יקללך ואשמת

Al-talshèyn èbhed el-adonàv pen yeqalèlekha ve-ashàmta.

Don't bad-mouth a slave to his master, in case he backbites you and you end up being held responsible for it.

משלי ל"א/ Proverbs 30.10

A reflection on Proverbs 30.10 ‘So often we can speak before we think, and run down someone with our tongue in a way which sets up a trail of enmity ahead of us. The Wise man of the Proverbs highlights here a situation where a slave might displease someone, and they complain to his master. However, this could backfire on the complainant when the slave gives his story, which could result in the angry, offended person being held responsible. It is good to give honest feedback about service we receive, but to badmouth people in the process will only lead to rage and division.’

December 19 2017 Day 353 Readings Zephaniah 1:1-3:20, Revelation 10:1-11, Psalm 138:1-8, Proverbs 30:11-14

רני בת-ציון הריעו ישראל שמחי ועלזי בכל-לב בת ירושלם

יהוה אלהיך בקרבך גבור ישוע ישש עליך בשמחה יחריש באהבתו יגיל עליך.

Rònni, Bat Tziyon! harì-u, Yisra'el! Simchi ve--àlzi be-khòl lev, Bat Yerushalàyim
Adonài Elohayikh be-kirbèkh gibbòr Yoshia; yasìs alàyikh be-simchàh, yacharish be-ahavatò, yagìl alàyikh

Sing, Daughter of Zion! Shout it out, Israel! Rejoice wholeheartedly, Daughter of Jerusalem
The LORD your God, who is within you, is mighty and will rescue; He will celebrate you with joy, relaxing in His love, dancing because of you

צפניה ג"ד יז / Zephaniah 3v14,17/

A reflection on Zephaniah 3.14,17 ‘Zephaniah gives God’s people reason for celebration and exuberant expression because God Himself is dancing and singing , secure in the love He has for them. Why would we not let our emotions demonstrate our joy, since our God Himself expresses His over us?’

καὶ ἔλαβον τὸ βιβλαρίδιον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου καὶ κατέφαγον αὐτό, καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματι μου ὡς μέλι γλυκὺ· καὶ ὅτε ἔφαγον αὐτό, ἐπικράνηθῃ ἡ κοιλία μου.

Kai èlabhon to bhibhlarìdhion ek tees cheeròs tou angèlou kai katèphagon avtò, kai een en to stòmatì-mou os mèli glykèe; kai òte èphagon avtò, epikrànthee ee kilia mou.

So I took the little scroll from the hands of the angel and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth; but when I had eaten it, it turned bitter in my stomach.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 10.11

A reflection on Revelation 10.11 'As the vision of the cataclysm of earth's decline continues around him, John experiences the paradox of God's word, sweet in his mouth, yet bitter in his stomach. This message of life is the most glorious news to us, yet when we see its rejection and the descent into chaos of God's beloved creation, it is painful to us, and drives us to pray and prophesy relief and release to come into the midst of darkness, just as John is called to do.'

December 20 2017 Day 354 Readings Haggai 1:1-2:23, Revelation 11:1-19, Psalm 139:1-24, Proverbs 30:15-16

גדול יהיה כבוד הבית הזה האחרון מן-הראשון אמר יהוה צבאות ובמקום הזה אתן
שלום נאם יהוה צבאות

'Gadòl yihyèh kebhòd ha-bàyt ha-zèh ha-acharòn min ha-rishòn', amàr Adonài tzeva'òt, 'u-bha-maqòm ha-zèh ettèn shalòm', ne'ùm Adonài tzebha'òt.

'Greater will be the gravity and import of this latest temple building than of the original', says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I will grant wholeness-peace', says the LORD of hosts

Haggai 2v9/ חגיי ב"ט ט

A reflection on Haggai 2.9: 'The promise is that however the physical appearance of the house they are building might turn out, someone is coming who will transfigure it into a place of glory, a place of the full gravity of God – the best is yet to come. One called the Delight of All Nations (2.7 Heb.- 'Chemdat kol ha-goyim') will come, one who will carry forward the Lord's planetary purpose to embrace the whole world and reconcile it to the Creator. He will come to this Temple, and He will transcend any earthly beauty or glory.'

λέγοντες· εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὅτι εἴληφας τὴν δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐβασίλευσας

Lègondes, 'Evcharistòumen si, Kýrie o Theòs o pandokràtor, o ón, kai o een kai o erchòmenos, òti èleephass teen dhýnamìn-sou teen meghàleen kai ebbasilevsas.'

They (the twenty-four elders) are saying, 'We thank you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was and who is to come, for You have taken up Your great power and you have inaugurated your reign.'

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 11.17

A reflection on Revelation 11.17 'In spite of the efforts of mankind to silence the witnesses of God, they have been raised from death itself and continue to make His name great. At this, heaven's courts resound with praise and worship, and the assertion that the Almighty God has inaugurated His reign, which will not be thwarted.'

December 21 2017 Day 355 Readings Zechariah 1:1-21, Revelation 12:1-17, Psalm 140:1-13, Proverbs 30:17

אל-תהיו כצבתיכם אשר קראו-אליהם הנביאים הראשנים לאמר כה אמר יהוה צבאות
שובו נא מדרכיכם הרעים ומעלליכם הרעים ולא שמעו ולא-הקשיבו אלי נאם-יהוה
Al-tihyù kha-abhotèykhem ashèr kar'ù alèyhem ha-nebhi'im ha-rishonim, leymòr, 'Koh amàr Adonài tzebha'òt, shùbhhu na mi-darkhèykhem ha-ra'im u-ma-alelèykhem ha-ra'im, ve-lò sham'ù ve-lò hiqshibhu eylài', ne-ùm Adonài.

Don't be like your forefathers to whom the first prophets cried and said, 'This is what the Lord of hosts says, turn from your evil ways and from your evil actions'; but they didn't listen and did not take any notice of me, says the Lord.

Zechariah 1.4/זכריה א"ד

A reflection on Zechariah 1.4 'There is a great danger that we take the Lord's grace for granted in our walk with Him, forgetting that our day to day experience with Him is one of constant, ongoing conversion, making choices to walk with Him, taking actions that allow Him to make us more like Jesus. Zechariah warns his listeners not to be like their forefathers, who refused to heed God's appeal to turn from evil and follow His ways, forfeiting the treasure God had planned for them.'

καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν· ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατηγορὸς τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός.

Kai êekousa phonên megâleen en to ouranò lègousin, 'Àrti eyèneto ee soteeria kai ee dhýnamis kai ee bhasilèia tou Theou eemòn kai ee exousia tou Christou avtòu, òti ebhlèethee o katègoros ton adhelphòn eemòn, o kateegoròn avtòn enòpion tou Theou eemòn eemèras kai nyktòs.

And I heard a loud voice in the heaven saying, 'Now the rescue and the power and the reign of our God and the authority of His Messiah has begun, for the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been overthrown, the one who condemned them before God day and night.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 12.10

A reflection on Revelation 12.10 'The personification of evil, the devil, the accuser of God's people, is to be overthrown in the final analysis. His incessant, lying voice with its blanket condemnation of God's people will be silenced, so that all we can hear in the end is the affirmation and the love of the Father our King and His anointed One, our Rescuer Jesus. Until that time, we can disbelieve all the enemy's dribbling falsehoods about those Jesus has redeemed!'

December 22 2017 Day 356 Readings Zechariah 2:1-3:10, Revelation 13:1-13:18, Psalm 141:1-10, Proverbs 30:18-20

וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה-לָּהּ נֹאֵם-יְהוָה חוֹמַת אֵשׁ סָבִיב וּלְכַבֹּד אֶהְיֶה בְּתוֹכָהּ

Ve-anì ehyèh lah ne'ùm Adonài chòmât esh savìv u-lekhavòd ehyèh ve-tokhàh

And I will be to her (Jerusalem), says the LORD, a wall of fire around her and I will be the full weight of glory in her midst

Zechariah 2v9/ זכריה ב"ט

A reflection on Zechariah 2.9: 'In this third vision, there is a promise that Jerusalem will be guarded by the Lord Himself, even though it may not yet have walls. The Lord draws back the scattered people, to populate the 'holy land', and He will live among them.'

Ἔσθι ἡ σοφία ἐστίν· ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου· ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶ· καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ.

Ôdhe ee sophìa estìn; o êchon noon psyphisàto ton arithmòn tou theerìou. Arithmòs gar anthròpou estì; kai o arithmòs avtòu exakòsi-ee exèekonda ex.

Here is an insight; let whoever has a mind to, work out the meaning of the number of the wild beast, for the number signifies a man, and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

A reflection on Revelation 13.18 'There has been much written about 'the number of the beast' and much made about the figure 666. Scholars have discerned a solution, however, when they take into account that John is a Jew, and Hebrew letters all have a numerical value. If the numbers represented by the letters of the Hebrew rendering of the name Nero Caesar are added together, (NRON QSR = 50, 200, 6, 50, 100, 60, 200) they total 666. Nero was the Caesar who turned Rome's wrath against the Jesus-people and started the imperial persecution. However, he is also a symbol of all anti-Jesus ideology, and its control of human affairs in opposition to the Lord's being King over all. Whatever way we look at it, man without His Creator will always miss the mark he was made for.'

December 23 2017 Day 357 Readings Zechariah 4:1-5:11, Revelation 14:1-20, Psalm 142:1-7, Proverbs 30:21-23

וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר זֶה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-זְרֻבָבֶל לֵאמֹר לֹא בְחֵיל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי אִם-בְּרוּחִי
אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Va-ya'an va-yomèr elày leymòr, 'Zeh debhàr Adonài el-Zerùbbabhel, leymòr, lo bhe-chàylil ve-lò bhe-khòach, ki im be-ruchì, amàr Adonài tzebha'òt.'

And he replied, saying, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by force, and not by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.'

Zechariah 4.6/זכריה ד"ו

A reflection on Zechariah 4.6 'The angel's response here concerns the meaning of Zechariah's vision of a seven-branched menorah lampstand, symbolic of Israel, continually supplied by two adjacent olive trees, feeding oil into the bowls of the lamps. The reply, directed to Zerubbabel, the governor of the Jewish returnees from exile to Judah, reminds God's people that their life depends not on their might and ability, but on the flow of God's own Spirit into them, giving them the power to carry on with the calling of God upon them.'

καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῆς μεγάλης· καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἦν ἤκουσα, ὡς κιθαρῳδῶν κιθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς κιθάραις αὐτῶν.

Kai èekousa phonèen ek tou ouranòu os phonèen ydhàton pollòn kai os phonèen bhrondeès megàlees; kai ee phonèe een èekousa, os kitharodhòn kitharizòndon en tais kithàrais avton. And I heard a sound from the sky like the sound of rushing water and like the sound of mighty thunder; and the sound which I heard was of singers accompanied by stringed instruments, strumming on their strings.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 14.2

A reflection on Revelation 14.2 'John now sees Christ as the Lamb standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, and the twelve by twelve thousand redeemed already referred to earlier, from the tribes of Israel. The link here is that this is the ancient city of David, and these are those redeemed out of the old covenant people of God. He hears a thunderous waterfall of harps, accompanying the new song which the Jewish remnant sing, which only they know, and which only they can learn. These are sexually pure, and kept for God. Like the tribe of Levi before them, they are specially dedicated to God and the Lamb for their service.'

December 24 2017 Day 358 Readings Zechariah 6:1-7:14, Revelation 15:1-8, Psalm 143:1-12, Proverbs 30:24-28

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר מִשְׁפַּט אֲמַת שְׁפֹטוּ וְנִחְסְדוּ וְנִחְמַיִם עָשׂוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו

Koh amàr Adonài tzebha'òt lemòr, 'mishpat, èmet shephotù ve-chèsed ve-rachamìm asù ish et-achìv'

Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying, with equity and integrity, restore what's right, and show covenant-graced commitment and compassion in action, each to his brother

Zechariah 7v9/ זכריה ז"ט

A reflection on Zechariah 7.9: 'Zechariah reminds them of the words spoken to previous generations, before the fall of Jerusalem and exile, that instead of focussing on religious rituals and formalities, they should act with a true right-wising justice which brings God's order (Heb mishpat, emet), with self-sacrificial obligation to the covenant (Heb chesed) and with gut-level compassion (Heb rachamim) , resulting in the lifting of exploitation of the widow and orphan, the immigrant and the poor.'

καὶ ἄδουσι τὴν ᾠδὴν Μωϋσέως τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ᾠδὴν τοῦ ἀρνίου λέγοντες· μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστά τὰ ἔργα σου, Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ· δίκαιαι καὶ ἀληθιναὶ αἱ ὁδοί σου, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐθνῶν·

Kai àdhousi teen odhèen Moysèos tou dhòulou tou Theòu kai teen odhèen tou arniou lèghondes, 'Megàla kai thavmastà ta èrga sou, Kýrie o Theòs o pandokràtor; dhìkai-ai kai aleethinài ai odhì sou, o bhasilèvs ton ethnòn.'

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the lamb, saying 'Great and wonderful are your work, Lord God, ruler of all; just and true are your ways, o King of the nations.'(or 'saints')

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 15.3

A reflection on Revelation 15.3 'Revelation is full of the account of the expressive worship going on before the face of God; here, accompanied by strings, the martyrs of God sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, in praise of the Lord's ways, just and true in everything.'

December 25 2017 Day 359 Readings Zechariah 8:1-23, Revelation 16:1-21, Psalm 144:1-15, Proverbs 30:29-31

וְהָלְכוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי אֶחָד-לְאֶחָד לֵאמֹר נִלְכֶה הַלֹּךְ לְחַלּוֹת אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה וְלִבְקֹשׁ אֶת-יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי-גַם-אֲנִי

Ve-halkhù yoshèbh achàt el achàt leymòr, 'Nelkhàh halòkh le-chalòt et penèy Adonài u-lebhaqèsh et Adonài tzebha'òt elkhà gam anì.'

And citizens will go to one another saying, 'Come on, let's go and pray before the face of the Lord and let's express our desire to the Lord of hosts; I'm going too!'

Zechariah 8.21/ זכריה ח"כא

A reflection on Zechariah 8.21 'Zechariah the prophet envisages many people coming in search of the Lord's presence, bringing one another to express their desire and pray to Him. There are echoes of this in the great story we celebrate today, when the shepherds say to one another, 'Come on, let's go and see this event the Lord has told us about.' (Lk.2.15) Coming into His presence, let's join them in worship and wonder before the face of God who has become flesh in Jesus.'

Ἴδοὺ ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης· μακάριος ὁ γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῇ καὶ βλέπωσι τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην αὐτοῦ.

Idhòu, èrchomai os klèpteēs; makàrios o gregoròn kai teeròn ta imàtia avtòu, ìna mee yimnòs peripatèe kai bhlèposi teen ascheemosýneen avtòu.

Look, I am coming like thief; there will be blessing for the one who keeps alert with their clothes packed so that they won't be walking around naked, exposed to onlookers.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 16.15

A reflection on Revelation 16.15 'Jesus' first appearance on earth was in hiddenness and obscurity. His second coming will be public and unmissable. John hears Jesus warning the earth to keep watch for His return, which is promised and expected, and yet will be as unlooked for as a thief's breaking in. For those who are packed and ready to go, His appearance will bring joy, not shame.'

Rev.15.1 Gk 53'35 Heb 52'00

December 26 2017 Day 360 Readings Zechariah 9:1-17, Revelation 17:1-18, Psalm 145:1-21, Proverbs 30:32

גילי מאד בת-ציון הריעי בת ירושלים הנה מלכה יבוא לך צדיק ונושע הוא עני ורכב על-
חמור ועל-עיר בן-אתנות

Gili me'òd, bat Tziyòn, Yerushalàyim, hinèh, malkèkha yabhò lakh, tzaddìq ve-noshà hu, anì ve-rokhèbh al chamòr ve-al-ben atonòt.

Dance in celebration, Zion's daughter, Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you, the righteous Rescuer, humble, riding on a donkey, on an ass's colt.

Zechariah 9.9/ט"ט זכריה

A reflection on Zechariah 9.9 'What kind of king comes riding on a donkey? One who turns upside-down the human ideology of power and status communicated through material wealth. The king Zion is invited to celebrate, who will come in during the occupation of Jerusalem by Rome centuries later, is the epitome of humility, the Peace-Prince, who will bring wholeness to the nations and the cessation of hostility to Israel. He is Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah whom we are still celebrating today!'

οὔτοι μετὰ τοῦ ἀρνίου πολεμήσουσι, καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον νικήσει αὐτούς, ὅτι Κύριος κυρίων ἐστὶ καὶ Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων, καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ πιστοί.

Òuti metà tou arniou polemèsousai, kai to arnion nikèesi avtòus, òti Kýrios kyrìon estì kai Bhasilèvs bhasilèon, kai ee met'avtòu kleeti kai eklekti kai pisti.

These battle against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, accompanied by His called and chosen and faithful ones.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 17.14

A reflection on Revelation 17.14 'The princes of the earth, in league with the power of the beast, battle the Lamb, but the Lamb's victory has already been assured at the cross and sealed by the empty grave. The future is undoubted, and alongside this King of kings and Lord of lords shall be all those who will respond to His call, His choosing and be faithful to Him. The republic of man without Christ offers no lasting outcome; the Lamb of God offers purpose, destiny and life unlimited!'

December 27 2017 Day 361 Readings Zechariah 10:1-11:17, Revelation 18:1-24, Psalm 146:1-10, Proverbs 30:33

שאלו מיהוה מטר בעת מלקוש יהוה עשה חזיזים ומטר-גשם יתן להם לאיש עשב
בשדה

Sha'alù me'Adonài matàr be-èt malqòsh; Adonài osèh chazizìm u-metàr gèshem, yittèn lahèm le-ish èysebh ba-sadèh.

Ask the Lord for rain at the season of the spring rain; it's the Lord who makes lightning-clouds and who gives them rain-showers, to each one fields of greenery.

Zechariah 10v1/א"י זכריה

A reflection on Zechariah 10.1 'Instead of going to the non-gods of the surrounding nations, Zechariah urges the Lord's people to ask Him for the key rains which will bring on the new crops, the rains of spring. He is the maker of heaven and earth, the maker of clouds and showers. Throughout the Scriptures, rain is a sign of God's favour, and its withholding a means of turning people's hearts to the real provider of all things. Why would they go anywhere else other than to the source of that blessing and provision?'

Καὶ οἱ ἔμποροι τῆς γῆς κλαίουσι καὶ πενθοῦσιν ἐπ' αὐτῆ, ὅτι τὸν γόμον αὐτῶν οὐδεὶς ἀγοράζει οὐκέτι

Kai ee èmbori tees yeesh klàiousi kai penthòusin ep'avtèe, òti ton gòmòn avtòn oudhis agoràzee oukèti.

And the traders of the earth will be weeping and mourning over her (Babylon), for no one will be buying their stuff any more.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 18.11

A reflection on Revelation 18.11 'In the last analysis, the idolatrous economic systems of the earth come to nothing and fail, since they depend on getting, not giving. The apostle's vision clearly depicts an eventual massive failure of the man-made systems of wealth-hoarding, with associated loss and lament over the emptiness of their god-defying ideology.'

December 28 2017 Day 362 Readings Zechariah 12:1-13:9, Revelation 19:1-21, Psalm 147:1-20, Proverbs 31:1-7

וְשָׁפַכְתִּי עַל-בַּיִת דָּוִד וְעַל יוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם רוּחַ חַן וְתַחֲנוּנִים וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר-דָּקְרוּ
וְסָפְדוּ עָלָיו כְּמִסְפַּד עַל-הַיָּחִיד וְהִמְרָ עָלָיו כְּהִמְרָ עַל-הַבְּכוֹר

Ve-shaphàkhti al beyt David ve-àl yoshèbh Yerushalàyim rùach cheyn ve-tachanunìm ve-hibbìtu elày et-ashèr daqarù, ve-sophdù alàv ke-mispèd al ha-yachìd ve-hamèr alàv ke-hamèr al-ha-bakhòr.

And I will pour out on the house of David and on the residents of Jerusalem a spirit of favour and prayer, as they consider the one they pierced, and they will lament over him like the lamenting over an only child, mourning him as they would mourn a firstborn.

Zechariah 12.10/יב"י זכריה

A reflection on Zechariah 12.10 'In his account of the death of Jesus, John (Jn.19.37) refers back to these words of Zechariah, 'they will look on the one they pierced'; but this looking is fired with the spirit of soft-heartedness and prayer, causing a deep lament inside at the sin that nailed him through for our sakes. He still bears those piercings, those wounds, as the most precious sign of His love and as the record of the bride-price paid for us in His blood.'

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν μεγάλην ὄχλου πολλοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λεγόντων· ἄλληλούϊα· ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν

Metà tàvta, èekousa os phonèen megàleen òchlou pollòu en to ouranò legòndon, 'Alleelòuia; ee soteerìa kai ee dhòxa kai ee dhýnamis tou Theòu eemòn.

After this, I heard something like the mighty voice of a great crowd in heaven, saying, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power are from our God!'

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 19.1

A reflection on Revelaton 19.1 ‘The worship of heaven is like no other, for those who worship are not mere sycophants swept up in a hysteria of adulation; they are those who have experienced the rescue of God and the transformation of their lives from slavery to inheritance, from being prisoners to being free. The centre of their adoration is their Father and their Bridegroom, the consummation of an unending and deepening love story. And in the midst of it, Israel’s language is heard, echoing the voices of psalmists and prophets, lifting up the eternal ‘Hallelu-Jah!’

December 29 2017 Day 363 Readings Zechariah 14:1-21, Revelation 20:1-15, Psalm 148:1-14, Proverbs 31:8-9

וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה יְהוָה אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד
Ve-hayàh Adonài le-mèlek al-kol-ha-àretz; be-yòm ha-hù yihyèh Adonài echàd u-shemò echàd

And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be number One, and His name unique

Zechariah 14v9/ זכריה יד"ט

A reflection on Zechariah 14.9: ‘Zechariah speaks of the era of the reign, the kingdom of God over all things, and the ‘living water’ (fresh water) will flow from Jerusalem, which will be secure, throughout the nation, in a scenario similar to Ezekiel’s vision of chapter 47. The Lord God, Maker of heaven and earth, in His uniqueness and peerless sovereignty will be number One.’

Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ οὗ ἄπο προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς.

Kai èedhon thrònon mègan levkòn kai ton kathèmenon ep’ avtòu ou apò prosòpo èphiyen ee yee kai o ouranòs, kai tòpos ooch evrèthee avtìs.

And I saw a vast white throne and the One sitting on it, from whose face earth and heaven tried to flee, but there was no other place for them to go.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 20.11

A reflection on Revelation 20.11 ‘Israel’s Singer says, ‘Where can I run from your face?’ (Ps 139.7) In the final analysis, when all things come before the Lord, there is nowhere else, other than the place within sight of His face. This is what John sees, the overwhelming power of God’s presence which holds us all to account.’

December 30 2017 Day 364 Readings Malachi 1:1-2:17, Revelation 21:1-27, Psalm 149:1-9, Proverbs 31:10-24

וְלֹא-אֶחָד עָשָׂה וְשָׂאָר רוּחַ לּוֹ וּמָה הָאֶחָד מִבְּקֶשׁ זָרַע אֱלֹהִים וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם בְּרוּחֲכֶם
וּבְאִשְׁתׁ נְעוּרֵיךָ אַל-יִבְגְּד

Ve-lò echàd asàh, ve-she'àr rùach lo? U-màh ha-echàd? Me-bhaqèsh zèra' Elohim; ve-nishmartèm be-rùchakhem u-ve-èshet ne'urèkha al-yibhgòd

And has He (God) not made them one, and left them His Spirit? Why does He want them one? Because He desires Godly children; so keep guard over your spirit and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

Malachi 2v15/ מלאכי ב"ה

A reflection on Malachi 2.15: ‘Marriages with unbelievers and divorce from those to whom covenant has been given are causing the Lord, their one Father to be separated from His people. There is a call, then to faithfulness. Because of the ongoing laxness of Judah, the Messenger of the Lord Himself will come, the messenger of the covenant to bring judgement and justice; but the event will be a purifying, and a purging of the people.’

καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης· ἰδοὺ ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ σκηνώσει μετ’ αὐτῶν, καὶ αὐτοὶ λαοὶ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς ἔσται μετ’ αὐτῶν·

Kai èekousa phonèes megàlees ek tou ouranou legòusees, ‘Idhòu, ee skeenèe tou Theòu metà ton anthròpon, kai skeenòsee met’avtòn, kai avtì la-èe avtòu èsondai, kai avtòs o Theòs èstai met’avtòn.’

And I heard a loud voice from the skies crying, ‘Look, the tent of God is alongside men, and He will make camp with them and they will be His people and He Himself will be with them.’

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 21.3

A reflection on Revelation 21.3 ‘John is very clear in verse 22 of this chapter that there is no temple in the new Jerusalem, since the Lord and the Lamb are its temple, yet God declares that His tent is being set up among men, as it was in the days of Moses in the desert. This time, however, there will be no separation, God will camp with mankind. John’s use of the word ‘skeenee’ in the Greek and the verb ‘skeenin’ mark the sense of God’s mobility and of an adventure continuing. Temples are immobile structures; for our God, who is always developing and progressing, His tent is a sign of His unfolding story with us.’

יְהַלְלוּ שְׁמוֹ בְּמַחֲוֹל בְּתֹף וּכְנֹר יִזְמְרוּ-לוֹ

Yehallelù shemò ve-machòl, be-tòph ve-khinnòr yezàmru lo

Let them go crazy for His name with dancing; with drumming and strings let them sing to Him!

Psalm 149v3/ תהילים קמט"ג

A reflection on Psalm 149.3: ‘A further unascribed praise song, this psalm sees the people of Israel fully engaged with all their beings, physical, emotional and spiritual in the worship of the Lord, through music, dance and song. Even in the night, praise is heard from their beds.’

December 31 2017 Day 365 Readings Malachi 3:1-4:6, Revelation 22:1-21, Psalm 150:1-6, Proverbs 31:25-31

הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ מַלְאָכִי וּפְנֵה-דֶרֶךְ לְפָנַי וּפְתָאֵם יְבוֹא אֶל-הַיְכָלוֹ הָאֲדוֹן אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים
וּמַלְאָךְ הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם חֹפְצִים הִנֵּה-בָא--אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Hinenì sholèach mal’akhì u-phinnàh dèrech lephanày u-phit’òm yabhò el heykhalò ashèr atèm mebhàqshìm u-mal’àkh ha-berit ashèr atèm haphetzìm hinèh ba amàr Adonài tzebha’òt. ‘Look, I am sending my messenger to prepare my path, and the Lord you are looking for and the covenant-messenger you have been wanting will come all of a sudden to the Lord’s temple’ says the Lord of hosts.

מלאכי ג"א/ Malachi 3.1

A reflection on Malachi 3.1 ‘With the closing breaths of the Hebrew Scriptures, the promise is made of the coming of the messenger in the spirit of Elijah, to prepare the Lord’s sudden arrival. That same Lord arrives in His temple as a babe in arms, not as a conquering hero of war. He comes, reduced, dependent, secretly entering the history of this planet in obscurity. Later by His death and resurrection He sunders in two the separating veil of that same temple, breaking open forever to all mankind access to the holiest place, reconciling us to God by His blood.’

Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἔπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ρίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαυΐδ, ὁ ἀστήρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός.
Egò Ieesòs èpempsa ton àngelòn mou martyrèesai ymìn tàvta epì tais ekklesìais. Egò eemi ee rìza kai to yènos Dhavid, o astèer o lampròs o proindòs.

I, Jesus have sent my messenger to declare openly all these things over you in the gatherings of His designated people. I am both the root and the offspring of David, the shining star heralding the dawn.

Revelation/Αποκαλυψις 22.16

A reflection on Revelation 22.16 ‘In this closing passage, John records the words he hears from Jesus Himself, promising His return as the A to Z, first and last, source of all and completion of all (Greek, archée kai télos – télos meaning the summing up, the purpose.) He blesses those who keep their robes clean with the city in view, but emphasises the separation that will come before the end from the practitioners of evil. Jesus describes Himself in a last ‘I am’ of Scripture as the Root and Seed of David, the bright morning star, that is, Venus, the last star in the sky, announcing the dawn at the end of night.’

שְׂקֵר הַחַן וְהַבֵּל הַיְפִי אִשָּׁה יִרְאֵת-יְהוָה הִיא תִתְהַלֵּל

Shèqer ha-chèn ve-hèbhel ha-yòphi ishàh yiràt-Adonài hee tit-hallèl

Fairness is fickle and beauty is fleeting, but a woman in awe of the LORD, she is to be celebrated

משלי לא"ל/30v31

A reflection on Prov.31.30 ‘The latter part of Proverbs 31 is in celebration of the woman of character, one who does not find her identity in her looks but in how God sees her. She is in awe of God and loves Him, and because of that she does not need to look for security in her image. This woman’s actions will commend her, and she is to be celebrated.’