

LOGOSOPHIA

A Pilgrim's Journal
of Life, Love & Literature



Issue #12
Autumn 2022

the Virtue of *Gratitude* with Thanksgiving and Humility



Greetings, fellow pilgrims!

Welcome to our twelfth issue, based on Gratitude, along with corresponding virtues Thanksgiving and Humility. In this issue you will find poetry, multiple examples of why thanksgiving is important, some thoughts on thoughts, a new story, a continuation of *The Knights of Adonai*, and more! Also, check out our photo contest entries on page six!

Please enjoy, and let us know what you think.

Happy Autumn!

Sarah Levesque

Editor in Chief

WANTED

- Readers & listeners of any faith to interact respectfully with writers and other readers through book/media suggestions and letters to the editor, as well as comments on LogoSophiaMag.com and social media
- Writers of Christian faith to augment the works of our Staff
- Artists to help us beautify our issues and blog
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DID YOU HEAR?

We have an audio version of this issue!
Find it through these providers:



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*Happy
Autumn!*



Letters to the Editor & Others

This is where we will be putting anything you send in:
letters to the editor, notes to authors, questions,
agreements and disagreements...
we can't wait to see what you have to say!
Just be sure to tell us what
article you're responding to!

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Bible Verse

"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!"
(Psalm 107:1)

Definitions

Provided by Merriam Webster Dictionary Online

Gratitude - the state of being grateful : THANKFULNESS

Thanksgiving -

1 a - capitalized : THANKSGIVING DAY

1 b - a public acknowledgment or celebration of divine goodness

2: the act of giving thanks

3: a prayer expressing gratitude

Humility - freedom from pride or arrogance : the quality or state of being humble

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

Dear God,

Thank You not only for Your countless blessings
but for the challenges that draw us near to You.

Thank You for the hard moments when You gave me the strength
to wait out the storm. Jesus, You are so good.

Whatever storms come into my life,

You are my Rock and my Shelter.

Thank You for Your sustenance that fills me,

Your light that surrounds me,

and Your love that never fails.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

- Wendi Lou Lee

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/thanksgiving-prayers-blessings-of-gratitude.html>

Autumn Photo Contest Entries

WINNER
Tree by Patricia Smith



Cranberries by
Cordelia Fitzgerald
&
Powerline Path by
Sarah Levesque



**CALLING
ALL
PHOTOGRAPHERS**



We are holding a contest for the best picture
that encapsulates

WINTER

The winning entry will be put on the
Table of Contents page of our Winter issue.

Email your entry to
Editors.LogoSophia@gmail.com
by December 9th - subject "Winter Photo Contest"
See LogoSophiaMag.com for details

A Theological Wristwatch

By Lawrence "Mack in Texas" Hall

At bedtime my watch suggests to me
That I should meditate with gratitude
For someone who is important in my life
Who gives a deeper meaning to each day

And so I stare at the lava-lamp effect
On the face of my watch, as if it were
An artifact from McGoochan's The Village
Wanting information, not meditation

And I am grateful; it's just that the watch
Suggests only For What, and not To Whom



List of Gratitude

By Amanda Pizzolatto

Grateful for the blessings I have
Grateful for the sufferings that I endure
Grateful for all my friends and family
But especially for Divine Love, fiery and sure

Grateful that He came down to Earth
So that we can have another chance
Grateful for opened gates and a Heavenly
family
For mighty angels armed with sword and
lance

Grateful for this world that He built
And the masterful paint strokes to color it
For the colorful life He filled it with
And the orbs in the sky that keep it lit

Grateful for this life we are given
And the journey we all must take
For the lessons we must learn along the way
The way back home, for goodness sake



The Knights of Adonai

Part 2: Thanks and In-fighting

By Joshua David Ling

After about a year of petitions,
And desperately pleading his case,
Brother Owain finally saw
His work by God's good grace.
Twenty-five knights from many places—
Their histories scrubbed by vow—
Stood in his abbey's halls in Derby.
They all saluted and bowed.

He looked out upon their varied forms
Imagining all they had seen.
Some were young, and some were old,
And some were in between.
Some had limbs or even eyes missing.
Some had even lost tongues.
But if anyone could heal their immortal souls,
God would be the only one.

Brother Owain called them all to order,
As they sat down to a feast.
He said a blessing and they all ate—
From the greatest to the least.
One of the men whose foot was twisted,
And hobbled upon a crutch,
Made his way over to sit by Owain
And of the new order, he made much.

**Man: "I'm so blessed by all you have done here.
I'm so pleased I will continue to serve the Lord."**

**Owain: "It's excellent to have you here, brother.
To train in Word and Sword."**

**Man: "My name is Artūrs. Whatever you need,
I will gladly help you along.
When I heard of this new order,
I made it my heart's mission and song."**

**Following the meal together,
The knights raised a Psalm,
Praising God Almighty for strength
And a place to belong.
But as the evening began to wear on,
Arguments began to break.
And one particular struggle turned violent,
As the hall began to quake.**

**One of the youngest Knights of the new order
Shoved another to the ground.
Another stood between the two
And words were exchanged all around.**

**Man who attacked: "Jerusalem will be taken again!
By my hand or another!!"**

**Owain: "Calm yourself, sir!
Sit down, my brother!"**

Commodified Thanks

By Caroline Liberatore

Culturally, the concept of gratitude is portrayed as a warming ideal, an entity in and of itself to be desired. “Thankful” has been long plastered on coffee mugs and home decor, and, by doing so, has become lackluster in meaning. This virtue has been commodified to necessitate warm cups of coffee, autumn leaves cascading outside the bedroom window, and a broad selection of pumpkin-based recipes. Ah, let us be thankful—but first, let us conjure up something worth being thankful for.

Ironically, gratitude has become something to be coveted. Although the presented aroma surrounding thankfulness is often one of warmth and comfort, I’ll admit, I often feel more war-torn in the fight for it. To be grateful is seldom a pursuit accompanied by ease. It requires active thought and intention; we are not, by nature, thankful creatures.

This tension brings me to the question: what is the nature of our most common experiences of gratitude? What are we grateful for: the good things of life or all things of life? What is the standard by which we are grateful? If it is merely an emotional effort—as in, I’m grateful for things that are good and desired—even here, I wilt in failure. Even when I am enveloped by abundance, I find myself first inclined to yearn in dissatisfaction rather than cherish.

Is this the key to our unwavering gratitude: to cherish? To realize a position of humility on the earth and to hold dearly instead of reach? To fight daily to nibble on bits of this gritty entity we call gratitude? How often it eludes us. It is difficult to achieve and rarely is it maintained—but let us not succumb to the weariness of this task by trading it for the simplicity of coffee-mug-gratitude.

Let us allow the candid light of gratitude to radiate truly, and, in doing so, illuminate the duller contours of daily life. We are entitled to nothing, so let us be grateful for all. The One who shifts the seasons and nurtures the harvests is just in all of His movements. He is the one “who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all” (Romans 8:32 NIV). Is this not, in the end, the matter of all things?

Let our gratitude be greater, that we would be hungry for the eternal gift of Christ. But let it also be lesser, that we might have the humility to accept all transient things contentedly.



HOLY

St. Francis of Assisi

By Sarah Levesque

HEROES

Saint Francis of Assisi is best known for starting the religious order commonly called the Franciscans in his honor, and for his love of animals, sometimes even preaching to them. He was born around 1181 and grew up well off, the life of the party, wishing to be a crusader. Instead, while defending his city as a young man, he was captured, imprisoned, and fell ill. He came out of the experience a changed man. He sold all he could, to the displeasure of his father whose supplies he was selling, and became an itinerant preacher. God told Francis to rebuild His Church, and Francis took the command literally, moving stones until the Church of San Domiano was no longer run down.

Over the course of his life, Francis collected followers who would eventually become the order of Friars Minor - the official name of the Franciscan order. They vowed poverty - true poverty, begging for every need; chastity, and obedience. Francis received the stigmata, which he kept hidden, and through his preaching and that of his fellow mendicants, helped to rebuild the Church as God had commanded. Though loving his companions, he waited to be called home to Heaven. Yet, as he waited, in suffering and pain, he praised God. He wrote the great Canticle of Brother Sun, All Creatures of Our God and King, and other hymns of praise. Whenever something went awry according to normal standards - when Francis was insulted, when he was out in a storm, when he didn't have enough food - he gave thanks to God that he was allowed to experience the sufferings of Christ. He did as St. Paul had bidden the Colossians and dedicated himself to thankfulness (3:15). Francis died in 1226 and, following one of the quickest canonization processes in history, was declared a saint in 1228.

May we, too, remember to give God thanks not only in our joy, but also in our pain.

Sources: Six Ways To Pray From Six Great Saints by Gloria Hutchinson; britannica.com/biography/Saint-Francis-of-Assisi





Eucharist & Gratitude

By Cordelia Fitzgerald and Sarah Levesque

Eucharist is a term Catholics often use to refer to Holy Communion. This rather unusual word comes from the Greek *eukharistia* meaning “thanksgiving,” a meaning with no immediately obvious connection to the sacrifice of Christ’s Body and Blood. However, this very same Greek word is used to describe the thanksgiving sacrifice the Israelites would perform in the Old Testament. In fact, a good portion of the Old Testament is devoted to Thanksgiving: the Psalms, many of the stories, and the Passover, at which memorial Jesus chose to give us His very Self in the form of bread and wine. He chose to give us this sacrifice of thanksgiving on this particular feast with some propriety; both are a memorial of a great deliverance.

And a Great Deliverance is necessary – from the very beginning of the Bible, God’s Chosen People failed to show gratitude or trust. For example, in Exodus, when they cried out for food in the desert, God sent them manna. Despite this deliverance, they showed no gratitude and instead complained further. They failed to thank God for delivering them from Egypt, instead creating and worshiping a golden calf. This sad story is repeated again and again throughout their history as the Israelites failed to learn their lesson.

Fast forward to Jesus. Again we see this cycle of the lack of trust and the need for deliverance, but this time, *in the whole of human history*. Man has sinned, God has delivered them through His Son. And Christ, outside of time, fulfills the gratitude in His sacrifice of His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity on the feast of the Passover – at the Last Supper. His *eukharistia* teaches mankind how to give thanks to the Father, by giving all the glory to God. He tells us to “do this in memory of Me,” to repeat and relive His perfect act of thanksgiving. Having given us the perfect example, He expects us to emulate it.

Yet, we still fail. We forget to celebrate; we forget to give thanks. We take this beautiful sacrifice of thanksgiving for granted. How insane is that—taking the extreme and incredible sacrifice of OUR GOD for granted? Yet we all do it; there are things that claim our attention, and the Eucharist is always there for us. So it takes a back seat in our lives.

God knows we’re human, but we owe it to Him to slow down, to remember, to give thanks—in church at the sacrifice of the Eucharist, in the car, in the shower, everywhere and anywhere. He has shown us how, and now we need to learn the lesson that our ancestors the Israelites failed to: giving thanks “in all circumstances” and turning to God at all moments with gratitude for His wondrous gifts.

Moses and Zipporah

By B. Craig Grafton

“Oh Moses, Moses, what are we going to do? I’m pregnant,” cried Zipporah as she ran into the arms of the man she loved, the man whose one month old child she now carried in her womb.

Moses wrapped his arms around her, comforting her. He held her tightly and with eyes closed kissed her cheek and whispered into her ear. “We have to elope now, tonight, my love. I don’t have enough money to buy your freedom and won’t have it before the baby is born. We have to flee to Mexico where you’ll be free and where we can get married since Texas makes it a felony for us to marry and for any preacher to marry us. Folks there in Mexico will be more tolerant of us and our children. Life will be a lot easier for us there than it ever will be here.”

Moses had left his parents and siblings in Kentucky and gone to Texas in the summer of 1835. Texas won its independence from Mexico in April 1836 and became its own country then, a country that allowed slavery. Before that, when Texas was part of Mexico, slavery was against the law but the Americans settling there paid no attention and Mexico did nothing about it. Though Texas had recently been annexed to the United States this March of 1845, both Moses and Zipporah knew that when Texas officially became a state, which would be sometime soon, nothing would change. Their marriage would still be against the law. They had to leave.

Zipporah hugged him tight and said, “Yes, tonight, but first I must tell Papa of our plans. He knows about you but I don’t think he knows that I’m pregnant.”

Their midnight trysts had been going on for two years now. They could not give each other up for any reason. Their bond was too strong. They would plod ahead, a typical young couple in love, typical except that he was free, white, and twenty one, and she was black and a slave.

“I will go with you to ask your father’s blessing,” said Moses. “It is the right thing to do.”

Zipporah’s father was Jethro. He was a little man, old before his time. Slavery had sucked the life out of him. Stoop shouldered, bent over, bald on top and gray around the ears, shriveled and wrinkled and with few teeth left, he awaited his fate as the young couple approached him. He knew what they wanted and he knew that she was pregnant.

“I am not like Jethro in the Good Book,” he told them. “I don’t have seven daughters. Only one whose mother died giving birth to our child and now you are going to take her from me,” he said, directing his words to Moses. “From me, an old slave that has nothing in this world but his daughter.” He shook his head and stared at the dirt floor of his cabin and wiped his eyes.

“Sir,” said Moses, but Jethro cut him off.

"I know you're young and in love and color be damned. 'Love will conquer all.' Well it will take a Biblical miracle for you two to make it to Mexico. They'll hang you, young man, when they catch you, and they will catch you. My daughter will be sold away. I'll never see her again or my grandchild ever. I'll have nothing, but you two will have had your love. That's all that matters now, isn't it?"

"Sir, I would like your blessing," muttered Moses.

"You calling me 'sir;' well ain't that rich," snapped back the old black man. "Don't have the freedom money do you? Getting all excited and worked up with my daughter you stopped thinking didn't you? Stopped thinking about all but ravishing her. Didn't think about the price of freedom or what could happen."

"Papa, please," begged Zipporah. "Please stop." The tears streamed down her face. "We're going. It's hard enough for me to say goodbye. Don't make it any worse," she pleaded.

The old man stopped and chewed over the inevitable. "Go if you must," he spit out. "But before you do, can you at least stop and give your old father a kiss and a hug goodbye tonight?" Jethro then halted again. He regained his composure. "I apologize for my behavior, sir," he said to Moses. "I respect and accept the decision of you two. I understand how things are. I will give you two a wedding present when you stop back, and, yes, you have my blessing. You're leaving as soon as it's dark, I assume?"

Moses nodded his head yes.

Jethro smiled and chuckled. "Oh well, I was young and in love once," he told them. "Your mother was on a plantation five miles from here, Zipporah. I used to sneak over each night whenever I could to court her. She was as slim, sleek, graceful, and as beautiful as you, daughter." The old man reminisced, staring off into space. "Oh yes, I remember how it was," he muttered to himself. "I knew this day would come but not like this," he said, his conversation now directed to the two of them. There they were, holding hands and looking at each other the way young couples in love did. Jethro knew the die was cast.

An hour after dusk Moses and Zipporah were back at Jethro's cabin. All they had between them was one horse, a saddlebag with all their possessions, and hope. Jethro stepped forward and hugged his daughter. They both were weeping. Moses shook Jethro's hand and the men patted each other on the back. Tears were in both men's eyes.

"Here," said Jethro, extending his hand to his daughter and handing her a paper. "This is your manumission document, your freedom paper. You can leave now a free woman. No one will track you down. It's my wedding gift to the two of you."

"Papa, how?" stammered Zipporah.

"I had been saving from my odd jobs Master let me do for some of the neighbors the past years. I was hoping to save enough to buy both our freedoms but I'm too feeble to work anymore and things have changed now. Had enough to buy yours and I went

to Master after I talked to you two earlier and we agreed on a price.”

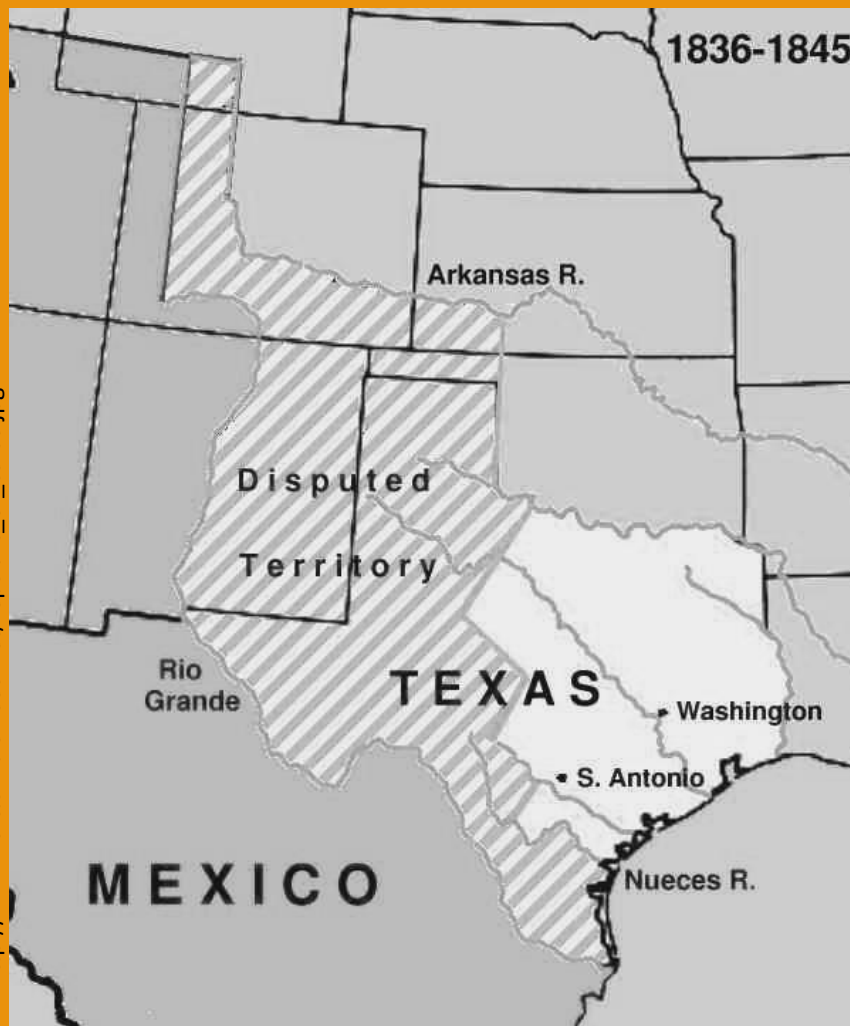
“Here,” she said to Moses, handing him the paper. “Read it, please.”

Moses scrutinized the document and said, “Yes, it says you’re a free woman of color, Zipporah. Then turning to Jethro he said, “Thank you. I will pay you back as soon as I can.”

“No you won’t. I said it’s a wedding gift, not a loan,” he barked back. “But you can come back to visit me as soon as you’re able to travel with my grandchild, and you can write. Master said he’d read me any letters you send me.”

For some time they all stood there crying, crying tears of sadness and tears of joy. Moses and Zipporah journeyed to Mexico, were married, and settled just a little south of the Rio Grande. Their son Eleizer was born on November 29, 1845, one month before Texas became a state. That spring they discreetly traveled back to show Jethro his only grandchild. This time they cried again but this time they all cried joyful tears, tears of gratitude.

http://www.forttumbleweed.net/republic_of_texas.jpg



CONTROVERSY CORNER

Is there a limit to what a Christian ought to consume in art and media?

What is Controversy Corner?

Controversy Corner is the section of LogoSophia Magazine where people of different faith traditions discuss controversial topics in a succinct manner.

If you would like to submit a topic for discussion, please let us know!

Don't see your denomination represented? Help us fix that! We're always looking for new writers!

Disagree with the representative of your denomination? Write in and tell us why in a respectful manner, and we'll publish it in our next magazine under "Letters to the Editor & Comments"!

For these and any other questions, comments or suggestions, email us at Editors.LogoSophia@gmail.com.

Confessional Lutheran: Jordan Christensen aka J.C. Ellis

To my knowledge there is no official limit placed by Confessional Lutheran synods upon the consumption of media aside from pornography. Pornography is outright sinful.

In regards to other media, many Confessional Lutheran pastors do encourage Christians to be cautious to what they are consuming as not all media can have a good influence and some can in fact have a very negative influence.

CONTROVERSY CORNER

Is there a limit to what a Christian ought to consume in art and media?

Presbyterian Church Independent: Joshua David Ling

This issue, and Christian Liberty, are some of the founding issues Presbyterians went to war on during The Reformation in Europe and later, America. The Scripture is clear that what comes out of a man is that which defiles him, and so all of our confessions and creeds are in accordance with that assumption. Therefore, using wisdom and discernment become more of an individual endeavor that is colored specifically by one's own conscience, and the Covenants one keeps with his local Church. If a brother is sinning by his words or actions, one place that may be dug into for answers is, "What media is he consuming?" Because wrong-headed anti-Truth, anti-beauty, and anti-goodness all have their own part in weaseling us away from our True love, Christ.

Roman Catholic: Sarah Levesque

While the Catholic Church doesn't have a hard-and-fast line about consuming art and media (aside from condemning pornography), every Christian ought to be careful that what they consume does not lead them to the near occasion of sin, which is itself a sin. Humanity has always appreciated the idea of art (though individuals quibble on what art consists of) and has always utilized distractions, of course, and these can be healthy to a degree. After all, God has given us the propensity to crave beauty, to soak up stories, to thrive on discovery. We just need to exercise prudence and temperance, and not let the desire for beauty, for stories, for discovery control our lives. Pouring over Ancient Greek nudes for too long would likely be problematic. Many "fashion" magazines and websites feature beautiful, scantily clad models, which may lower one's self esteem even for those who are not sexually attracted to them. Social media, clickbait sites, and video platforms are addicting, which is bad not only for the viewer but also for those who ought to be receiving the viewer's attention. How often do we neglect people, chores, and other good and necessary things in favor of consuming media? In short, most art and media is not problematic in and of itself until it starts controlling us, taking us away from the people and obligations that need our attention.

AT ALL TIMES

BY SARAH LEVESQUE



Gratitude comes easily sometimes. We tend to thank God for the big things: when a friend returns to the faith, when a family member is healed, when a biopsy on a mass comes back marked “benign.” But what about the little things? When I was beginning my first full-time job, I was rarely on time, and any time I had a green at a stoplight I would feel the relief that we usually associate with the bigger things. So I would thank God. I still thank God for green lights. But it set me thinking, how many normal everyday things ought we to thank God for? The easy answer is everything. Sure, it seems excessive, but maybe it’s not. After all, the Bible tells us over and over and over again that we should praise the Lord at all times. So I pose these questions for myself and for you:

- How often do we thank God for our food, shelter, clothing?
- How often do we thank God for the people closest to us?
- How often do we thank God for our jobs, transportation, hobbies?
- How often do we thank God for our good books, movies, music, paintings, and those who worked hard to create them?

Of course, if we’re in the habit of thanking God, this is the stuff that comes easily. But St. Francis of Assisi urged his friends to go further, to follow St. Paul’s teaching to give thanks in everything (c.f. Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:18). This means thanking God not only for what is obviously good and for what we like, but also for things that seem negative. Which is hard. Nearly impossible. But he managed it, as did Corrie and Betsie Ten Boom, two of the many prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II (see the link below). We know that God uses all things for the good (c.f. Romans 8:28), so we should thank Him for the bad experiences that helped us to grow. We should thank Him for the rough times that brought us closer to Him. We should thank Him for having the painfully-earned qualifications to help someone else through their own issues. We should thank Him for allowing us to suffer that we may unite our pain to His for the good of others. Is it easy? Absolutely not. But it should be done anyway. I’m going to work on growing this virtue, and I hope you will too.

*<https://vancechristie.com/2016/11/22/giving-thanks-circumstances-corrie-ten-boom/>

Kind Consequence

By Caroline Liberatore

It rains on my birthday,
the farmer rejoices in relief.

The snow melts before Christmas,
the hands of the man under the bridge thaw.

I will choose to receive it all
in the shadow of my brevity.

For who am I to decide what is
good and what is not?

Writers & Artists Wanted!

**LogoSophia Magazine is looking for
more contributors for**

- the blog - magazine articles & artwork -**
- Controversy Corner - graphic design**

Email us at Editors.LogoSophia@gmail.com

Just Thank Him!

By Ian Wilson

One of the things that I've noticed of late is the amount of sheer ingratitude in our society today. I am, of course, not immune to this trend; in fact, in many ways I embody it. You see, I was once an entitled, ungrateful little snot.

Not too long ago, I was going through a bad time. Well, not really a bad time, but my attitude about it was bad. I felt like God “owed” me something for the service I had done. I thought—not consciously, you understand—that I deserved a reward for what I had done for Him, all the time I had spent in prayer and helping people. I felt like I deserved financial security and to have nice feelings, and not have to go through hard times. I felt that I deserved spiritual gifts like I saw some of my friends getting. I don't recall ever consciously thinking this, but once I had taken the time to examine myself, I realized that was indeed the case.

How did I come to this conclusion? I will probably blame the infiltration of the “health and wealth” heresy into mainstream evangelicalism. While I could go at length about how dangerous this heresy was, in my deepest thoughts, I believed it. Somehow, I had gotten the impression that my struggles were punishments from God for things I had done or failed to do. I had this idea that when something bad happened, it must be because I had done something to offend God, or that I had been judged unfairly. This is how sneaky that false doctrine is. So on I went, thinking God was angry with me because nothing in my life was going right (or so I thought) and in turn being angry at Him and unwilling to admit it.

Then one day—I believe it was during the Christmas season of 2020, either Advent or the Twelve Days—it struck me how self-centered and ungrateful I had been. I happened to be listening to the song *Shasta's Complaint* by Sarah Sparks that day, feeling rather miserable for whatever reason. The song is off Sparks' album *Into the Lantern Waste* which is based on C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The song is recounting a portion of the book *The Horse and his Boy* where the main character, Shasta, is having a conversation with Aslan, the Christ figure of Narnia. Shasta is feeling particularly miserable; it seems everything in his life has gone horribly wrong and he is consumed with self-pity. In the song Aslan replies:

*For only death in this cruel world is justly deserved
And you say that I don't answer
Just because you have not heard
But you don't know yet how to listen
Or to understand my voice*

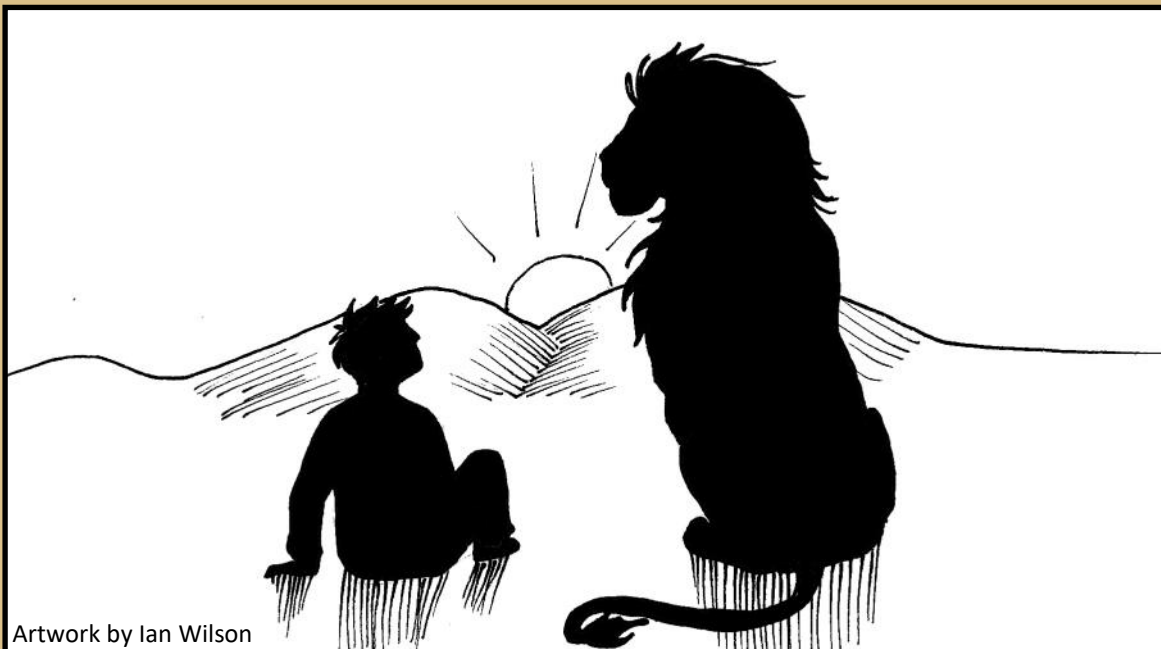
It was about that time that it hit me: I didn't deserve anything that I had. I had food on the table. I had good health. I had a roof over my head. I had people who cared for me. I didn't deserve any of that. The song continues:

*My love, I cared for you
I was the comfort you felt in the House of the Dead
I drove from you the beast in the night
All of this I have done while you slept*

That was when I realized that God had taken care of me in ways I had not even thought about and all I had done was shake my fist in His face and complain about not getting stuff that I felt I wanted. I was putting myself on the throne instead of God, thinking that I “deserved” to be treated specially when all I deserve is an eternity of suffering.

So then I started practicing thankfulness. I thanked God for everything, every day, even hard things. I realized that the key to the door of joy was gratitude. We must be thankful, even when it is difficult; ESPECIALLY when it is difficult, because even when times are at their bleakest is when we need it most. Some of the most joyful people I know are people who can still find reasons to be thankful even when times are desperate.

So practice thankfulness daily. In your daily prayers, thank God for whatever good has happened to you. In bad times, thank Him for the strength and the lessons He gave you. Just thank Him. It will make a world of difference.



Artwork by Ian Wilson

Author Interview With...

JOSHUA DAVID LING



Hello! Tell us a little about yourself.

I am Joshua David Ling, and I am a storyteller. I've been telling stories ever since I was a wee tot in diapers. Mom and Dad couldn't stop me, no matter how hard they tried. Of course, it didn't help that I had a steady diet of Narnia, Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and other anachronistic tales that instilled in me a sense of wonder, longing, and chivalry.

Though I'm over 30 years old, I still can't help but feel the tingle in my fingers every time I pick up a

book. But now, I mostly read them to my children and wife as a way of discipling them and leading them to love the beauty and universal truths found within the pages of enrapturing fiction.

In my own stories, I seek to combine elements and characters that continue to show those universal truths for the inherent beauty they already possess, and to primarily glorify the Creator of the greatest tale ever told. (Hint: It's the one you're living now.)

Tell us about what you write?

I write Sci-Fi, Fantasy and more in Epic poetry snippets (Brix) and continue in several worlds at once, using dice to choose which is the next chapter. I have long-term outlines to keep me from getting off track, and poetry is one of the things that keeps everything aesthetically intact.

When did you start writing, and why?

I started writing around 2003 because of the rise of flash animation and the gift of specific characters God gave me illumination for. Most of my early stories were and are mainly focused on superheroes. My earliest characters are still (though evolved some) in my "Super Hero Alliance Patrol Ensemble" comedy series.

Tell us about one of your stories.



Author Interview With...

JOSHUA DAVID LING



The last story I was working in was World Wide Warrior, part of my main superhero universe. I came up with Braden's story because I wanted to specifically address the idea of race and culture in a way that is both proud of the heritage God has given every individual, and also noting that we are all equal by our Adamic nature. Basically there's this guy who has every bloodline and ethnicity in his veins and he's called on to travel the world and deal both diplomatically and incognito and violently with some of the most global international crises.

How was this story different than any of your others?

World Wide Warrior is different because it allows me to focus on one human with such unique abilities and responsibilities that no one else in the world can do what he does. It shows extreme loneliness and how that loneliness can drive a person to good and bad. It allows me to examine deeper individualism that comes with the isolation of important work, and the finiteness of man.

How did you go about publishing your story?

I have tried every avenue for publishing, and at this point in time, I believe that the goal of my storytelling is first and foremost as encouragement to my fellow Christians. In order to accomplish that goal, I have found a combination of short and long-form content across all social media channels is the best way to present my gifts to Christendom. God has blessed me in my endeavors and I have not had to worry about money or feeding my family so long as I've remained faithful. I chose the term Poetry Brix because nobody else really does this type of serial storytelling. It's slowly becoming a thing on TikTok but people use it as a clickbait thing. The reason I chose the word "Brix" is because I'm building a wall, I'm building a story out of these solid pieces of poetry and it's one on top of another on top of another and hopefully over time they accumulate into a massive, amazing structure. And I spelled it differently so people can find me and not some other weirdness.



Author Interview With...

JOSHUA DAVID LING



Can you tell us a little more about the other things you're working on?

The fan favorites are *Ghost Trucker* - Mike Kraft is your standard lonely trucker on the open road but something paranormal keeps following him - and the other is *The Idiot's Guide to Illegal Tech Repair* - in a future where obsolete technology has become illegal to own or repair, groups of criminals have sought to earn plenty of illegal coin by selling their services. One such crew has lots of secrets to tell. I also have super-hero stuff, and others.

And are all of these Poetry Brix as well?

Yes. I almost exclusively publishing Poetry Brix right now. I am exploring other avenues - I've got some people trying to help me with making *The Idiot's Guide to Illegal Tech Repair* as a motion comic. We're working on it. I'd love to do books, but there doesn't seem to be a demand for it yet.

How many stories do you have going at once?

I'm going to have to count real quick. Let me see here... I have some series in Poetry Brix format that are not stories - some of them are highlights of other books like *Narnia* and *Lord of the Rings*, some of them are my own standalone poems, some of them are songs, some are Bible passages... but the ones that are original I have... there are nine I am currently writing, then I have some spin-off series that I'm working with that are not available yet. I use dice - I am a Reformed Christian who believes that God has predestined everything including dice. So what I do is I have these dice and get my answer as to which world I will work in and how long I will work in it - the minimum I feel like I can get things done is thirty minutes. My maximum I can do without feeling guilty that I'm not getting other stuff done is about two hours. That takes out all the thinking, which has allowed me to just do the next chapter when it comes and let God decide what's going where.



Author Interview With...

JOSHUA DAVID LING



What has writing taught you?

It has allowed me to delve deeper into the way God formed the world. What we do as authors, songwriters, and creators is inherently similar to aspects of God's creativity. And the way in which I love and hate my heroes and villains has helped me understand God's love and providence in a way I probably wouldn't have learned otherwise.

Who are you inspired by in your writing?

Lewis and Tolkien are always tops, but there's a few that have inspired me in other areas. Hans Christian Andersen and Joss Whedon are two big examples. Andersen's raw outpouring of his heart within his fairy tales feels so sincere in their heartbreaking richness, and Joss's seemingly automatic writing directly from character voice for dialogue are two of my favorite things to emulate.

What is your advice for writers?

Don't write to format. Be a pioneer. Learn the rules, but very quickly discard the ones that tell you WHAT you should write for the market. Write what you want and do it to the best of your ability in whatever avenue you choose to publish in.

Is there anything else you want to add?

*If it takes a million light bulbs
To see one finally glow,
If it takes a thousand and one tries
I'll gladly make it so.
If I have to do it daily,
I'll gladly suffer the grind.
For it's dragons that I'm chasing,
For a princess-prize Divine.*



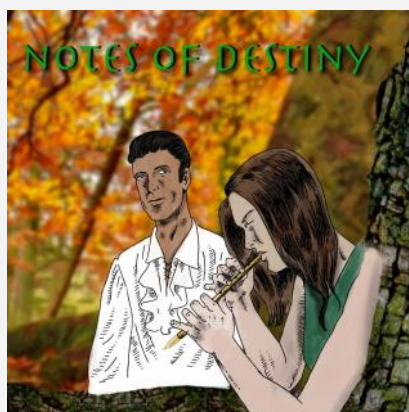
Author Interview With...

JOSHUA DAVID LING



Like what you see? Find Joshua's many stories on JoshuaDavidLing.com, on YouTube and on TikTok, as well as Facebook, Twitter, and every other social media platform!

But wait, there's more! Joshua's interview had a lot more to it - check it out (bloopers and all!) on YouTube!





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Scripture Search

1. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
2. Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!
3. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
4. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

A. Psalm 107:1

B. Colossians 3:12

C. Psalm 118:24

D. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

To Be Thankful

By Amanda Pizzolatto

When was the last time you were thankful for something? Everyone keeps saying to list off your blessings and whatever you're thankful for. But did you actually thank someone for those blessings? A grateful list is no good if you don't thank someone for that list. However, there are some things on that list that not many people seem to be able to be thanked for, or, more like no one is thanked for them. When a sense of gratitude fills one's heart, there is always someone towards whom that gratitude is aimed. Gratitude is the sense of awe and appreciation given to another person upon receiving a gift. So then, when that feeling fills you and there seems to be no one to give that appreciation to, who then do you give it to? Well, the answer for some is fairly obvious.

When that feeling of gratitude swells up in one's chest over something going right in the day, many a Christian would blurt, "Thank you God!" as they should. When a good thing happens to us, or a beautiful sunset takes your breath away, God is the one to thank for that as it is His handiwork. But unfortunately, many times, we don't think about thanking Him. Why is that? Have we, in general, begun to forget being grateful? If we are, we need to bring it back. Thank God every day for the blessings He has given, thank everyone you meet for their services, even if you are already paying them. A "thank you" goes a lot further than you think in making someone's day a bit brighter, and in this day and age, we need a little more light in the world. By being grateful, we show that we do see the importance of others, we see the good that is happening and we appreciate it.

This then is one of the types of prayer, to thank. There are five types, to worship or praise, to intercede or petition, to ask, to battle sin and spiritual enemies, and finally, to thank. All of which is outlined in the Our Father. But listen to your prayers, and the prayers of others. What is the type most commonly used? Not to say that it is bad to use that type, but that we may focus too much on it and we need to use the others equally as much. Thanking someone has become the bottom of the totem pole in our daily lives, it would seem. So the next time that feeling of gratitude surges within you, thank someone, especially God, for without Him, all good things are naught.



Artwork by Ian Wilson

Nun Danket 6767 6666

JOHANN CRUGER

1. Now thank we all our God, With heart and hand and voice - es,

Who wondrous things hath done, In Whom His world re - joice - es;

Who from our moth - er's arms Hath blessed us on our way

With count-less gifts of love And still is ours to - day. A-men.

2

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

3

All praise and thanks to God
The Father, now be given,
The Son, and Him Who reigns
With them in highest heaven,
The One Eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore. Amen.

TL. CATHERINE WINKWORTH

Thankfulness

By Sarah Levesque



"Now Thank We All Our God" is a song that I'm sure I heard as a child, but I didn't know particularly well until I was in my upper teens. Actually, the first memory I have of the song was when my brother and his 9th or 10th grade class sang a parody of it for the annual Thanksgiving banquet at his private school. Unfortunately I don't recall most of the lyrics. There was a line about "stuffing, 'tatos, squash, and Turkey in a crystal bowl", and the last verse ended "...and pies and pies and pies, and feeling fat and lazy!" To this day, this is my first thought when I hear the opening measures of this song.

Of course, the actual words are far more reverent. "Now thank we all our God / with heart and hands and voices...." What a wonderful thought! We ought to thank God not merely with our hearts, but also with our hands by working for the good of those around us, and by our voices by singing. Skipping ahead, we are reminded that "from our mothers' arms [God] / has blessed us on our way / with countless gifts of love, / and still is ours today." I will admit to wrestling with that last line. It just seemed oddly structured. Of course God has blessed us from the time we were babies (and before!) - He has kept us in existence, He sacrificed Himself for us, He gives us good things. But I wonder if the last line is getting at the fact that God, Himself, is ours. He gave His very self to us at the Last Supper. And He has never taken Himself away, so He is still ours today.

On to verse two. It recognizes that God is gracious or bountiful, and asks that He stays with us, gives us joyful hearts, peace, guidance and deliverance from harm; all very helpful things, and put very nicely to boot. The third verse is a mini catechesis lesson. While praising God, it points out that God is Father, Son, and Spirit, but one God who reigns in Heaven. It also reminds us that God always was, always is, and always will be in existence and in this role as King of Heaven.

So in three verses, we thank God for pretty much everything, we petition Him for the graces and virtues we need, and we praise Him and remember Who He is - Trinity. What a lovely hymn! It seems that the author, Martin Rinkart, was a Lutheran clergyman who faced war and plague in the late 1500s. Yet he still managed to pen this hymn of thanksgiving; a good reminder to be thankful in all circumstances.

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It Matters What People Think

By Monica Murray Derr

I have a friend with whom every conversation turns into a good-natured argument. (If you happen to be reading this, friend in question, this is a good thing.) It's not so formal as to qualify as debate, but every time we talk we challenge each other's ideas. Neither of us are likely to concede defeat, or that the other even has a point, but I leave every encounter with something to think about and, even if I don't change my mind, I at least understand another perspective on the issue.

Sometimes the thing I leave thinking about was not even what we were talking about. Our last encounter was one such friendly argument that ended when I had no response to her final point. She, I'm sure, viewed that as a win, but I am not willing to concede just yet. Now that I have collected my thoughts, in the creative fury that comes after you can't conjure a comeback, I will recount them here.

But I am getting ahead of myself. I have not told you what it is that prompted all this introspection. The lead-up is not important, but the conclusion was this: she said, "I didn't take you for one who cared what people thought."

That stopped me in my tracks. It's true, until now, I would have told you I don't care what people think. But now I believe that statement is imprecise. I do care how people perceive my behavior and therefore my character. I care whether that perception is true and whether it is worth the effort to change their opinion.

Now, you might be thinking that this is a long-winded way of saying that actually I care quite a bit what other people think of me. And of course I do! We all do. I defy you to find me one single person who genuinely doesn't care how other people perceive them. It's not that we don't care what other people think, it's that we know very quickly whether or not it is worth convincing them that they are wrong.

To possibly misquote Aristotle, man is a social animal. We live among each other. Human interaction is the foundation of civilization and the basis for all that is beautiful and tragic in our lives. To insist that you are completely unaffected by the opinions of others is to wish yourself isolated. Whether or not you act on those opinions is a different question.

This is what I mean when I say that we all care what other people think of us. But caring what other people think of us needn't dictate our actions. When we see someone as not caring what others think of them, what we really see is someone who makes quick and confident judgements whether or not to take others' thoughts to heart. Are those judgements fair? Maybe, maybe not.

Caring what people think is not only part of the human experience, it's an exercise in humility. It is acknowledging that my opinion of myself is not the only one that matters. It is being able to see the effect that your attitude and behavior has on other people, and discerning whether or not that is the effect you want your presence to have on those around you.

Of course, you cannot spend every waking moment worried that people might not like you. Not everyone will. That's just the way life is. But you can pay attention to the way people react to you and determine whether their reaction warrants any action on your part. So in short, if I could transport myself back into that conversation now, I would respond, no, I don't always care what people think, but I do always want to be aware of it.

Book & Media Recommendations

Freckles & Girl of the Limberlost

by Gene Stratton-Porter, two chapter books with fantastic plots, characters you want to be your best friends in real life, and an amazing nature-focused background - the Limberlost swamp and forest of Indiana, before and during the original draining and deforestation in the early 1900s. Both are on my Reread Regularly list.

-Sarah

Chronicles of Prydain is a five book series (1964 - 1968) by Lloyd Alexander based on Welsh mythology. Often considered *The Lord of the Rings* for kids, this series is still dark, as per the tradition of fairy tales of old. With its own Fellowship setting out to destroy the Black Cauldron and stop its Dark Lord from controlling the world, Prydain has all the adventure and wonder necessary for a fantasy classic. -Amanda

Jim Henson's The Storyteller (TV show, 1988) A collection of popular folk and fairy tales told through puppetry, live actors, and spectacular makeup. Starring the late, great John Hurt as the Storyteller.

-T.K.

Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are? By Dr. Seuss. My personal favorite of all Dr. Seuss' books, this one portrays numerous ridiculous scenes such as Mr. Trotter, t-croser and i-dotter, and Harry Haddow who can't make a shadow, to remind children (and adults!) that even when they think their lives are awful, "some people are much more unlucky than you!" -Sarah

Adventures from Moominvalley, (TV show, 1990) The stories from Tove Jansson's Moomin novels and comics, lovingly animated in a classic style. A Treasure for young and old alike viewable FREE on Youtube!

-T.K.

The Book Pile (podcast) - Comedians and writers Kellen Erskine and Dave Vance read a book every week and then break it down for your enjoyment. It's the perfect podcast for people who read all the time or just want to sound like they do. -Monica

more

Book & Media Recommendations

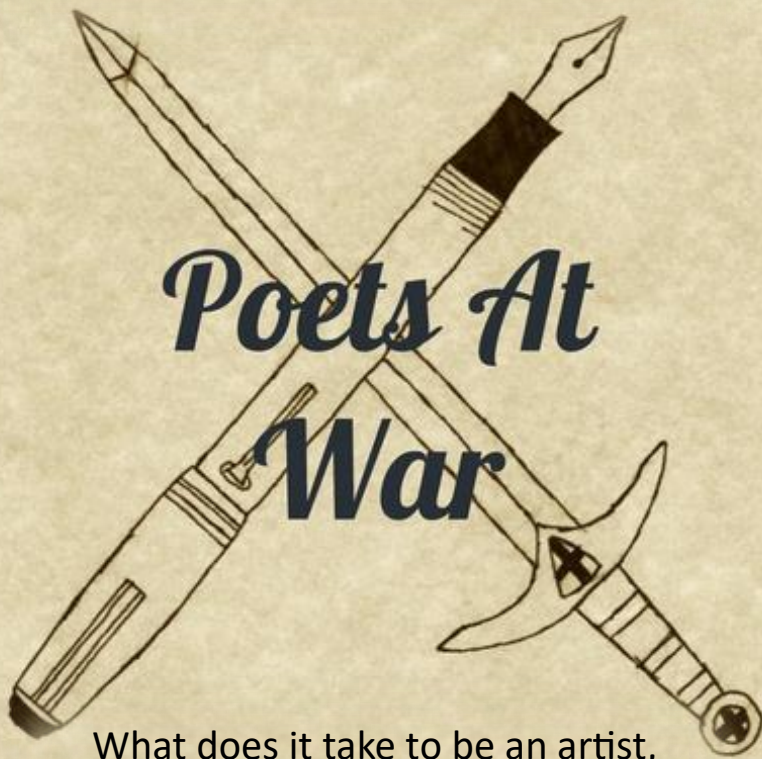
Treasure Island (1990), directed by Fraser C. Heston, stars Charlton Heston and Christian Bale in one of the most book-accurate adaptations of the beloved novel by Robert Louis Stevenson. Bale is the young, heroic Jim Hawkins while Heston gives a commanding performance as the menacing Long John Silver. -Amanda

What do YOU
want to
suggest?

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Peopled with Dreams by John Mark McMillan (Album, 2020) - John Mark McMillan, a longtime trailblazer in the realm of modern worship music, creates a cosmic listening experience with the musical sonics of classic rock, modern alternative, and orchestral landscapes. These soundscapes are succinctly mirrored by McMillan's lyrical journey of engaging with the wonder and mystery of rediscovered faith. -Caroline

The Lord of the Rings: Rings of Power (TV series) - A reimagining of events alluded to in the appendices of Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" depicting the forging of the titular rings and leading up to the story we all know. Contrary to popular expectations and misinformation, the series is clean and family friendly, and full of Christian messages and morals in keeping with the spirit of Tolkien's world. A welcome reform for modern fantasy TV. -Thomas Adams



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Bible Trivia!

Answers on the following page

- 1) On the fourth day of creation, God created...
 - A. Light
 - B. Sun, moon & stars
 - C. Plants & animals
 - D. Men
- 2) Who was Noah's grandfather?
 - A. Adam
 - B. Seth
 - C. Methuselah
 - D. Joseph
- 3) King David's general Uriah was what nationality?
 - A. Hittite
 - B. Egyptian
 - C. Israelite
 - D. Persian
- 4) Which three prophets were active during the time of the Babylonian Exile?
 - A. Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah
 - B. Ezekiel, Elisha, John the Baptist
 - C. Daniel, Isaiah, Nathan
 - D. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
- 5) True or False: The prophet Jeremiah was promised a good life by God if he would do God's will.
- 6) True or False: During the years of His ministry, Jesus chose to spend each Passover in Jerusalem.
- 7) Who was the red dragon of Revelation?
 - A. Satan
 - B. Michael the Archangel
 - C. Armageddon
 - D. Unknown

Bible Trivia Answers

Questions on the previous page

- 1) B: On the fourth day of creation, God created the sun, moon & stars. He had created light on the first day of creation, and from this we learn that God not only brings order from chaos, he brings order into more order (see Genesis 1).
- 2) C. Noah's grandfather was Methuselah , who lived 969 years according to Genesis 5:27.
- 3) A. King David's general Uriah was a Hittite. It was this Uriah the Hittite who was sent to die in battle that David could marry Bathsheba, Uriah's wife (see 2 Samuel 11).
- 4) D. The three prophets that were active during the time of the Babylonian Exile were Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.
- 5) False: The prophet Jeremiah was promised a difficult life by God, despite doing His will (Jeremiah 1:19; 16,).
- 6) True: During the years of His ministry, Jesus chose to spend each Passover in Jerusalem. This is shown in the Gospel of John, and is likely due to the fact that it was traditional for Jewish men to go to Jerusalem for the three major Jewish feasts (Passover, Feast of Weeks/Pentecost, Feast of Booths/Sukkoth).
- 7) A. The red dragon of Revelation was Satan.

MMD

MONICA MURRAY DERR

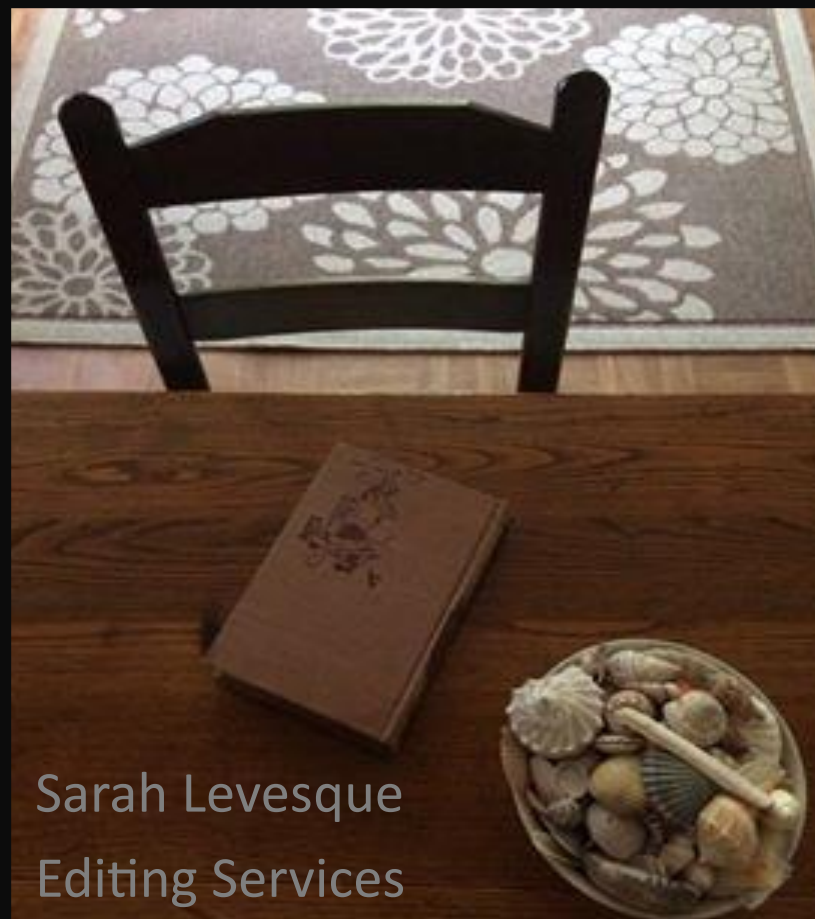
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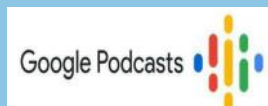
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