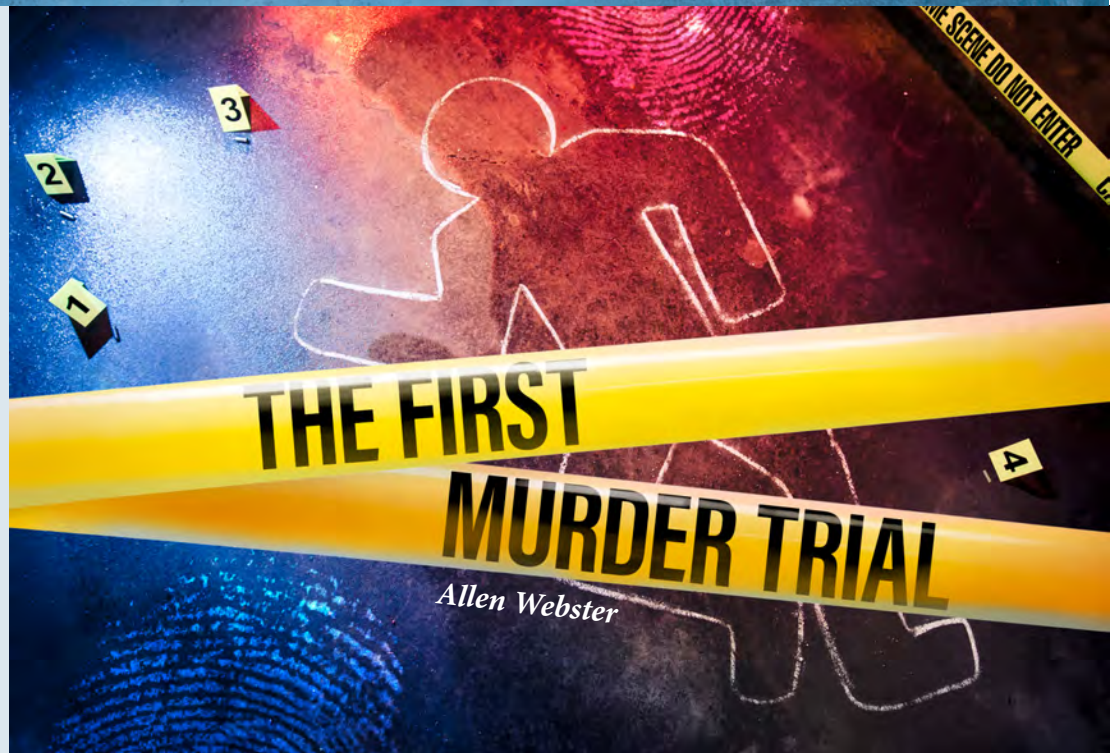


HOUSE to HOUSE  
HEART to HEART

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# House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 6



*Allen Webster*

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

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

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

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

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

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

## EVASION AND PERJURY

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

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

tion was a renunciation of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This account was later used for an example of a lack of natural brotherly love (1 John 3:11–12). Note that “brother” is used seven times in Genesis 4. It is bad enough to kill a complete stranger but far worse to kill one’s own brother.

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

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

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



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

### MOTIVE

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

### MODUS OPERANDI

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

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

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



### VERDICT AND SENTENCING

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

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

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

### Endnotes:

- 1 The first two human questions in the Bible had to do with sin. The first came after man’s struggle with Satan, the second after man’s struggle with man.
- 2 Tupper.
- 3 “Lay aside” here literally means “to discard clothing.”
- 4 Cruden.
- 5 Cf. 1 Samuel 18:8–9, “eyed,” *avan*, “to watch with jealousy;” cf. Mark 7:21–22, “an evil eye,” *ophthalmos*, figuratively “envy from the jealous side-glance” (Strong).
- 6 “indignation” means “envy, jealousy;” cf. 13:45; 17:5.



# WHO I AM MAKES A DIFFERENCE



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

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

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

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

That night the boss sat his fourteen-year-old son down and said, "The most

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

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

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

*"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*

GALATIANS 6:10



## Jesus Borrowed . . .

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

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

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

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

## Jesus Left . . .

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

*"For me a crown of righteousness."*

2 TIMOTHY 4:8

## God's Plan for Saving Man

- Divine Love:** John 3:16
- God's Grace:** Ephesians 2:8
- Christ's Blood:** Romans 5:9
- Holy Spirit's Word:** Romans 1:16
- Sinner's Faith:** Acts 16:31
- Sinner's Repentance:** Luke 13:3
- Sinner's Confession:** Romans 10:10
- Sinner's Baptism:** Acts 22:16
- Christian's Love:** Matthew 22:37
- Christian's Work:** James 2:24
- Christian's Hope:** Romans 8:24
- Christian's Endurance:** Revelation 2:10

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## What Mothers Do

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

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

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

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

She was a loyal friend when all others failed.

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

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

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

*"Honor your father and mother."*

EPHESIANS 6:2

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

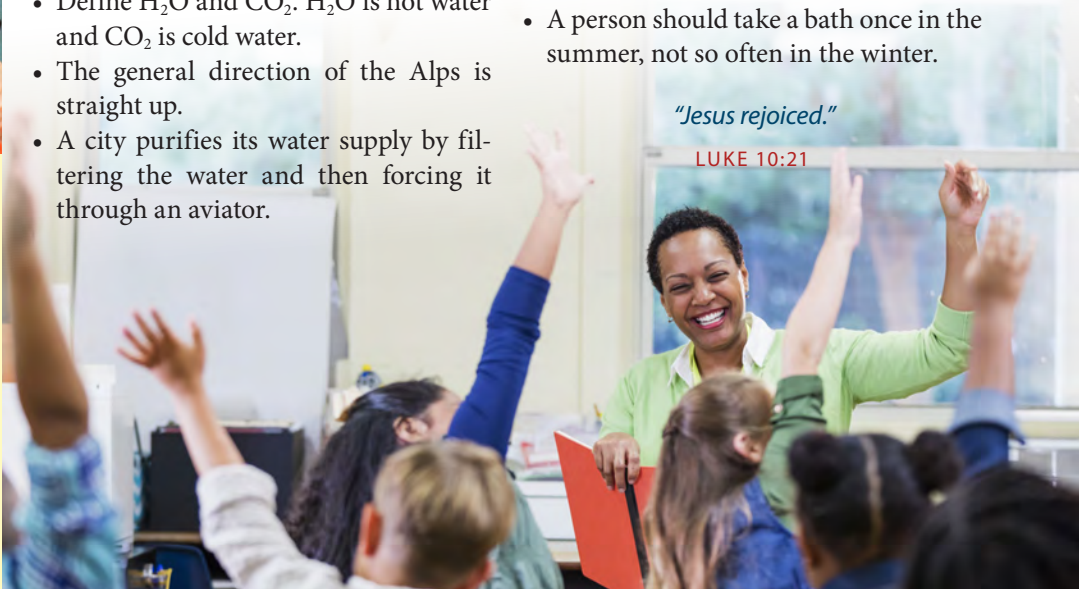
# Syntax—and Other Wisdom

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

- Syntax is the money collected at church from sinners.
- The future of "I give" is "I take."
- The parts of speech are lungs and air.
- The inhabitants of Moscow are called Mosquitoes.
- Define H<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub>. H<sub>2</sub>O is hot water and CO<sub>2</sub> is cold water.
- The general direction of the Alps is straight up.
- A city purifies its water supply by filtering the water and then forcing it through an aviator.
- The people who followed the Lord are called the twelve opossums.
- The spinal column is a long bunch of bones. The head sits on the top and you sit on the bottom.
- The four seasons are salt, pepper, mustard, and vinegar.
- The word *trousers* is an uncommon noun because it is singular at the top and plural at the bottom.
- A person should take a bath once in the summer, not so often in the winter.

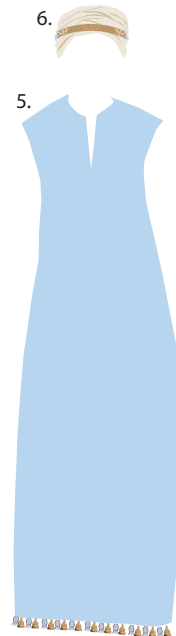
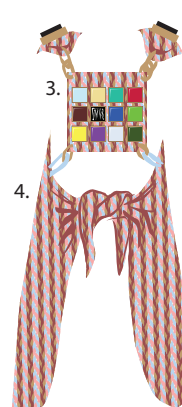
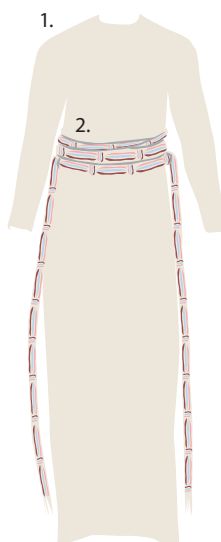
*"Jesus rejoiced."*

LUKE 10:21



## Just for Fun The Robes of the High Priest

Can you identify the different parts of the robes of the high priest? (Exodus 28)



- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# What Is God Telling Me?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Bible Quiz

VOLUME 26:6

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

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

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

### Answers to Previous Quizzes

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

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

## Starts with the Letter “G”

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

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

# THE GREAT I AM!

He is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. He is Creator of all and the keeper of Creation. He is the architect of the universe and the manager of all times. He always was, He always is, and He always will be unmoved, unchanged, and undefeated, but never undone.

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

The world cannot understand Him, armies cannot defeat Him, schools cannot fully explain Him, and leaders cannot ignore Him.

Herod could not kill him, the Pharisees could not confuse Him, and the people could not hold Him. Nero could not crush Him. Hitler could not silence Him, the New Age cannot replace Him, and talk show pundits cannot explain Him away.

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

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

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

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

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

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

GENESIS 15:1

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## Recommended Resource



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

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### I would like:



A Bible Correspondence Course



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

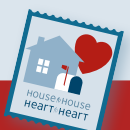


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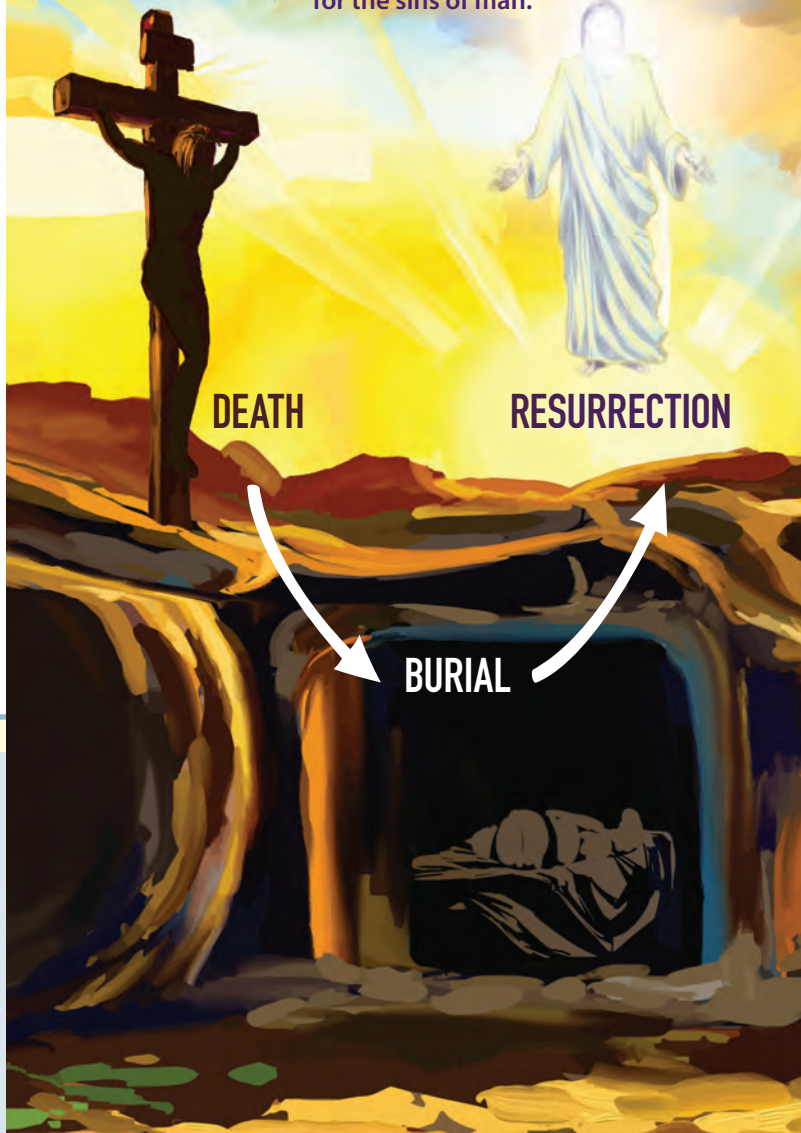


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# THE GOSPEL ENACTED

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3–4

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

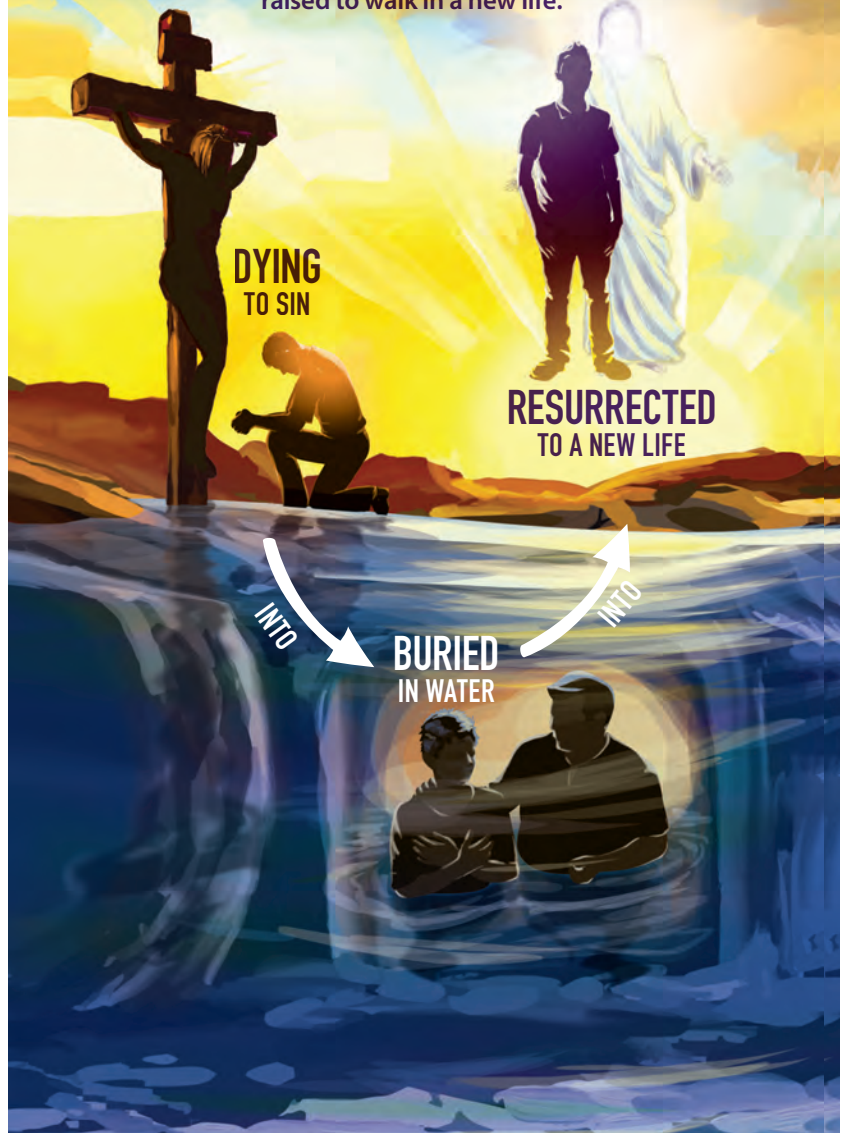


# THE GOSPEL REENACTED

IN BAPTISM (OBEYING THE GOSPEL)

ROMANS 6:3–5

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



## The Inevitable and the Immovable

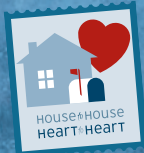
There are times in life when we find things in our way that we cannot move. Even after persistent, fervent prayer, the cup of suffering is brought to quivering lips, and we must drink of it—right down to the bitter dregs. Abraham Lincoln said, “Some troubles are like the stump an old farmer had in his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

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

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

GALATIANS 5:22





# House to House Heart to Heart

6/21



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