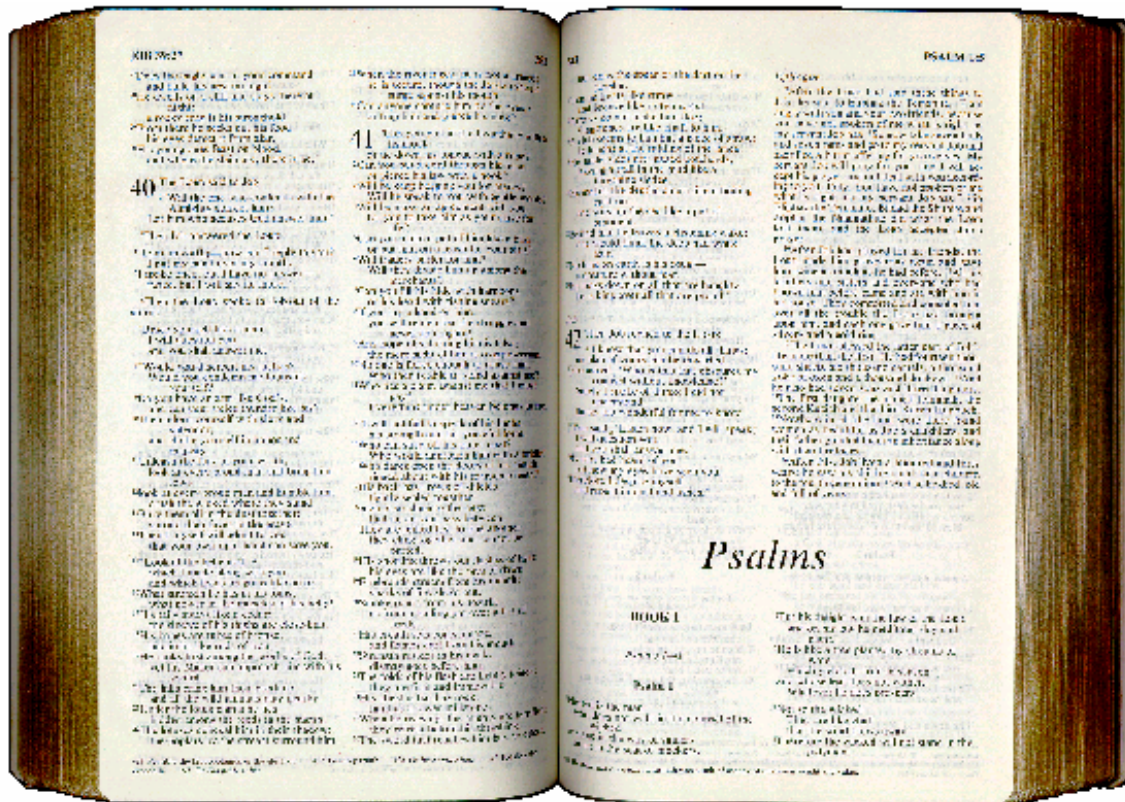


Bible Ballads for Reading Aloud

Catherine C. Shafer; These are familiar short Bible stories in verse. They include Cain and Abel, Isaac and Rebecca, Esau and Jacob, David and Saul, Ballad of Elijah, etc.



BIBLE BALLADS for Reading Aloud

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By
Catherine C. Shafer

Contact in care of:
C. Ronald and Barbara S. Johnson
PO Box 291
Dubois, Wyoming 82513
(307) 455-2779

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Cain and Abel

When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God
(A sin that God did not pardon)
They were forced to leave the comfortable life
They knew in Eden's garden.

Adam had always gathered their food
Which took little effort, but now
He must work to wrest nourishment from the earth
And live by the sweat of his brow.

After the Fall, Eve bore him two sons
Whose names were Cain and Abel.
(You'll find this story in GENESIS.
It's the truth and not a fable.)

When Cain was old enough to work
He became a farmer who plowed the soil
Producing a harvest with primitive tools
And hours of back-breaking toil.

Abel, the younger of the two,
Did not care to sow or reap.
He furnished the family with meat and wool
By keeping a flock of sheep.

In time each Son made an offering to God
To whom they were still closely bound.
Abel sacrificed a firstborn lamb
And Cain his first fruits from the ground.

We will never know exactly why
God in His wisdom elected
To accept the offering Abel made
While that of Cain He rejected.

(Each Son had given the best that he had.
It seems that each did his part.
Did God reject Cain's gift because
Of what He saw in Cain's heart?)

Cain in a blind and jealous rage
Went looking for his brother.
After angry words, he overcame
And quickly killed the other.

God who sees and hears all things
Knew what Cain had done.
As He had dealt with Adam and Eve
So He dealt with Adam's son.

Cain pretended innocence
When God asked where Abel might be.
"Am I my brother's keeper, Lord?"
He said defiantly.
With sternness and sorrow God spoke to him,
"You need not lie to Me.
From the ground that received it I can hear
Abel's blood cry to Me.

“As punishment for your brothers death
You must leave this place of your birth.
A fugitive you will always be
Upon the face of the earth.

“The ground will not give its strength to you.
You will sow to no avail.
Your labor will produce no fruit,
For your harvest is sure to fail.”

Cain bowed his head and then cried out
From the depths of his despair,
“How shall I live? My punishment
Is greater than I can bear!

“A Fugitive and a Vagabond!
Rootless and unfilled!
Everywhere I go my Name will be known
And I shall certainly be *Killed!*”

“I will put a Mark upon you,” God said
“So that when your story is told
Men will know that whoever does harm to Cain
Will suffer for it Sevenfold.”

~~~

This is almost all we know of Cain.  
In obedience to God  
He journeyed east of Edom and came  
To a land that the Bible calls Nod.

This Story has many Lessons for us,  
Though it happened eons ago.  
Did Cain repent and God relent?  
We can never know.

## Isaac and Rebecca

Abraham the Patriarch

Kept his faith when the way was dark.

He believed that God's words were true

And what the Lord promised the Lord would do.

He'd promised that Sara would have a son,

But barren years passed and there was none.

Then when her childbearing days were done -

A MIRACLE! ISAAC WAS BORN!

~~~~~

Isaac, the son of Abraham,

Owed his life to a heaven-sent-ram.

Isaac was leading a single life

When his father decided he needed a wife.

No woman of the Canaanites,

The Hittites, Hivites or Jebusites

Would do for Isaac, for she might make him fall

From the worship of God to the worship of Baal.

So Abraham sent for his trusted man

And said, "I want you to go to Haran -

The country where my fathers died

And find my son a beautiful bride."

"Bring her here if her heart is the Lord's.

Tell her I'm rich in flocks and herds.

Tell her that Isaac is handsome and bold -

And give her these bracelets of gleaming gold."

Feeling there was no time to waste
The faithful Servant set off in haste.
His camels crossed the burning sand
And came to Abraham's native land.

Here he rested beside a well
And thought of a way that he could tell
Which girl was the favored one -
Chosen by God for Abraham's son.

Many girls came, but none were right.
The Servant prepared to spend the night.
But at last, SHE came. She was fair of face
And carried her heavy pitcher with grace.

He spoke to her gently, "Do you think
You could draw me a little water to drink?
I've come from Canaan, a very long way
And I've had no water since yesterday."

She smiled, "Since you suffer from thirst,
I think I'll see to your needs first.
And after I have drawn for you
I'll draw some for your camels, too."
The Servant's heart leaped, for this was the test
Which showed he had reached the end of his quest.

As he drank the water, he asked her name
Also, from what family she came.
Her name was Rebecca, the girl replied
And she spoke of her family with much pride.

He felt the deepest joy within
When he learned they were of Abraham's kin -
That they were of Abraham's kin.

So, simply, he told her of his errand
And put golden earrings into her hand.
Then he felt the Lord gave him a sign
When she took him home to lodge and dine.

He met her relatives – father and mother,
Nieces and nephews, Laban her brother.
They welcomed him as an honored guest
And gave him food and a place to rest.

He told them of Abraham, his master -
Whom the Lord had saved from death and disaster,
Whom the Lord had blessed with silver and gold
And an upstanding son after he had grown old.

For this son's sake he had come to Haran.
He was seeking a bride to take back to Canaan.
Rebecca, he felt, was the bride that he sought
So he spread out many rich gifts he had brought.
They talked till their lamps burned low
And finally agreed that Rebecca should go.
But she could not leave the very next day -
There would have to be a short delay.

~~~~~

The young man was walking in the evening dew  
As a line of camels came into view.

“She has come, she has come!” Isaac cried.

“She has come at last, my beautiful bride!”

He ran to meet her and helped her alight.

When he saw her face, he loved her on sight.

**AND REBECCA LOVED HIM!**

And so they were married as God had willed.

And Abraham’s dearest wish was fulfilled.

## Esau and Jacob

Arab and Jew, Arab and Jew.  
Why is there war between the two?  
Will this hatred ever cease  
And Arab and Jew live together in peace?

The Bible tells us the story begins  
When the wife of Isaac was carrying twins.  
Two Nations struggled within her womb  
Signifying trouble to come.

Esau, as red as a turkey's comb  
Was the first of the babies to be born.  
Then Jacob, who would be a thorn  
In Esau's flesh, came into the world.  
His tiny fingers were strongly curled  
Around the heel of his older brother  
Showing he meant to rule the other.

Although they were twins, they were not the same  
And as they grew older, they became  
As different as two boys could be.  
Esau was active, wild and free.  
He loved the outdoors and brought home game  
Which he prepared as savory meat  
For his aging father Isaac to eat.

So Isaac favored the older brother  
While Jacob was the delight of his mother.  
Most of Jacob's time was spent  
Quietly within his tent.

He and his mother began to resent  
The Birthright and Blessing Esau had won  
Just for being the older son.  
To covet is an ugly sin  
But Jacob was jealous of his twin.  
He wanted all that Esau would have  
When their father Isaac went to his grave.

He was smaller than Esau, but quicker witted.  
In spite of his faults he was better fitted  
Than was his brave but careless brother  
To found a Nation like no other.  
A Nation of Twelve Holy Tribes  
Containing lawgivers, priests and scribes  
Who to their deaths would uphold the Lord  
And give the world His Blessed Word.

~~~~~

Esau had toiled in the field all day
While Jacob as usual had kept away
From such hard work. He was cooking a stew,
A thick, delicious stew
Fragrant with onions and garlic too.

Esau smelled it as he passed by
And he fell to the ground with a very loud cry.
“O Brother Jacob, I beg of you,
Give me some of that wonderful stew!
I smelled it as I was passing by.
Oh, give me some before I die!”

Jacob looked at him with a very cold eye.
He saw at once how he could gain
From Esau’s hunger and Esau’s pain
And a plan took shape in his nimble brain.
“Yes, my stew does have a wonderful smell.
I’ll give you some if you will sell
Your Birthright to me. Unless you do
You won’t get a mouthful of this stew!”

Poor Esau, starved for food and drink,
Was too hungry to bargain or even think,
“Take my Birthright. Go ahead!
What good will it be if I am dead!”
Jacob smiled to himself as he dished up the stew.

~~~~~

Now the Birthright was Jacob’s. Years went by  
And the Patriarch Isaac was soon to die.  
His body was weak and his eyes were dim  
When he sent for Esau to come to him.

“My much-loved son, the time draws near  
When I must leave what I hold most dear.  
But I will die contentedly  
If you will do one thing for me.  
“Get your bow and arrows and shoot some game,  
Bring it home and prepare the same  
Savory meat that I loved to eat.  
Hurry, my son, for time is pressing.  
When I have eaten I’ll give you my blessing.”

~~~~~

Rebecca the Mother was listening and heard
All that her husband said, every word.
She ran to Jacob with the news,
“We must act very fast or you will lose
Your father’s blessing, which will give
You power and riches as long as you live.
YOU MUST PRETEND TO BE ESAU!”

Jacob sadly shook his head.
“That plan won’t work, dear Mother,” he said,
“Isaac may be blind but he is still wary.
He knows I am smooth and Esau is hairy.
If he should feel my chest or hand
It won’t take him long to understand
The trick we’ve played. Then things will be worse.
I won’t get his blessing, I’ll get his curse!”

But Rebecca kept on. “You must get rid
Of these foolish fears. Go and kill a kid
And I will prepare the savory meat
Such as Isaac loves to eat.
Then I will take the kid’s hairy coat
And fasten it to your arms and throat.
ISAAC WILL THINK YOU ARE ESAU!
But you must wear your brother’s clothes,
For Isaac has a very keen nose
And you and Esau do not smell alike.

~~~~~

Wearing Esau’s clothes, he went  
Boldly into Isaac’s tent.  
The Old Man stirred and raised his head.  
“Tell me who you are,” he said.

“I am Esau, your firstborn son.  
What you asked of me I have done.  
I have brought the meat that you love to eat.  
Take it, Father, and give me your blessing.”

But Isaac, half suspecting a trick,  
Asked, “How did you find the game so quick?”  
Jacob wickedly replied  
“The Lord God served me as a guide.”  
Old Isaac was still not satisfied.



“The smell, my son, that your garments yield  
Is the smell of the sun on a ripened field.  
But I cannot bless you yet because  
Your voice is Jacob’s and not Esau’s.  
AND I DO NOT TRUST JACOB.

“But there is a way I can know the truth.  
Esau is hairy and Jacob is smooth.  
I must feel your skin. Come closer to me.  
My hands can learn what my eyes cannot see.”

Thankful that he was prepared for this test,  
He let Isaac feel his arms and chest.  
The Old Man sank back with a happy sigh,  
“Now I can bless you before I die.  
YOU REALLY ARE ESAU!”

~~~~~

And this was the blessing that Isaac spoke:
“My firstborn son, may God give to you
The richness of earth. And may heaven’s dew
Fall on your fields like gentle rain
Increasing your stores of wine and grain.
May your children’s children be
As numerous as the sands of the sea.
Over your brother may you be lord
And Nations tremble at your word.
God bless you, my son, again and again.”

~~~~~

Jacob had scarcely left the tent  
When Esau arrived after he had spent  
Hours in hunting and cooking the meat  
Which he had brought for Isaac to eat.  
“Sit up, father, and have your treat!”

The Old Man trembled in distress.  
“Whose food did I eat and whom did I bless?  
O Esau, Esau, my firstborn son.  
What have I done to you? What have I done?”

Esau gave a bitter cry,  
“You must have blessed Jacob. O Father, why?  
Have I been tricked again by my Brother?  
But surely, Father, you have another  
Blessing for me. Please say that you do.

Sadly, Isaac shook his head.  
“I cannot take back what I have said.  
I gave your brother riches and power.  
I set him high and I set you lower.  
You must live in the desert and live by your sword  
And bow to your brother as your lord.  
I can say no more.”

Esau’s anger burned fierce and hot.  
“I will soon untie this knot.  
Jacob will not live to see  
The blessings he has stolen from me.  
When the days of mourning for Isaac are past  
I will get even with Jacob at last.  
I WILL KILL HIM!”

When Rebecca heard of Esau's threat  
She said to Jacob, "You must get  
Away from here as fast as you can  
Or Esau will kill you. Go to Haran  
And find the house of my brother Laban  
Who will not receive you as a stranger.  
You must stay with him until the danger  
From Esau is over. You will learn  
From me when it is safe to return.

Jacob went into the desert alone  
And as he lay with his head on a stone  
He thought of the hurtful things he had done -  
The things that had forced him to depart  
From his boyhood home. God worked in his heart  
And he had a dream of bright angels descending  
From heaven to earth in lines unending,  
Fulfilling the missions of God among men  
And then returning to heaven again  
By means of a ladder. He awoke  
Just as the desert sunrise broke.

~~~~~

He had no trouble in reaching Haran
And finding the house of his uncle Laban.
Here he lived for many years
And here he knew both joy and tears.
He had to work hard for his beautiful wife
And Laban gave him a very hard life.

He learned how it felt to be badly treated,
Robbed of his wages, scorned and cheated.
Uncle Laban knew more tricks than a fox,
But Jacob grew rich in herds and flocks
As Isaac's blessing had promised.

~~~~~

Jacob was a wiser and better man  
When he made up his mind to go back to Canaan.  
They moved like an army over the sand  
As they journeyed to Jacob's native land.  
He had brought his children and both his wives  
Though Laban thought he owned their lives.

Each rode a camel, the beast that survives  
Without food or water for four days or more.  
He had brought other animals by the score,  
Goats and oxen, flocks of sheep,  
All that Laban had let him keep.  
And he had brought herdsmen, men he could trust  
To guard what was his and fight if they must.

~~~~~

As the borders of Canaan slowly drew near
Jacob's soul was shaken with fear.
In Canaan, his brother would await him
And Esau still had good reason to hate him.
His courage failed him completely when
He heard that Esau and four hundred men
Were coming to meet him. He couldn't turn back
So he braced his followers for an attack.

Would Esau kill him and then slaughter
His strong young sons and his beautiful daughter?
What should he do? What should he do?
He must try his best to appease Esau.
A gift from his flocks might please Esau.
All night he wrestled with God and himself.

Taking his courage in his hand
He went out alone to make a stand.
He walked toward Esau bowing low
And with down cast eyes awaited the blow.

But Esau gave a happy shout.
Of his joy, there could be no doubt.
He ran to Jacob with tears on his face
And caught him up in a strong embrace.
“O Jacob, Jacob! You have come home!”

He was not jealous of his brother
Though he saw how God had blessed his brother.
Yet, Esau did not choose to stay
And in a short time he rode away.
And nowhere does the Bible say
That the two ever met again.

David and Saul

This is the story of David and Saul,
Of one man's rise and another man's fall.
This is a story of COURAGE AND SHAME -
And JEALOUSY, that burned as a flame,
That burned like an evil flame.

In the days when the Prophet Samuel
Judged the Twelve Tribes of Israel
The people decided they wanted a king,
Though God had warned them this could bring
Sorrow upon their nation.

Samuel asked the Lord, "What shall I do?"
And the Lord said, "A man will come to you -
A king-like young man whom I have appointed -
And by your hands he must be anointed.
The people shall have what they want.

The young man came. His name was Saul.
He was darkly handsome and very tall,
The tallest man in Israel.
His actions suited the people well,
For he behaved like a king.

Filled with God's Spirit, he prophesied.
And by him the Tribes were unified.
Bravely he led them into battle,
Where the host of the Ammonites fell like cattle.
And the people made him their king.

Israel's land was surrounded by foes.
But the chief cause of their oppression and woes
(The enemies they dreaded most)
Were the Philistines who lived on the coast...
The cruel Philistines.

Their iron chariots raked the land,
Which they plundered with an iron hand.
They forced God's people to live in caves,
While sending many to violent graves.
The people cried out to God.

Then Saul, in anger and frustration,
Committed acts that estranged the Nation.
He tried to kill his eldest son -
The hero of Israel, Jonathan -
Because of a foolish vow.

Finally, Samuel said, "You are foolish and weak.
Because of this the Lord will seek
A man who is closer to His heart.
And from you, His Spirit shall depart.
No longer are you fit to be king.

~~~~~

Now, fearing for his life, Samuel had to use  
A local sacrifice as his excuse  
For making his journey to Bethlehem  
(A walled city south of Jerusalem)  
Where the Lord had told him to go.

There he met with Jesse, and inquired  
About the sons whom Jesse had sired.  
“Among them,” God said, “a king will be found.”  
Anointed by Him, later to be crowned,  
A better king than Saul.

Samuel considered each upstanding son,  
But he knew none of these was the one  
And so he asked Jesse, "Is there another?  
Have not these seven fine men a brother?"  
Jesse said, “It is so.”

“My youngest son is out on the hills  
Guarding my sheep; but if the Lord wills  
I'll send for him immediately  
And bring him here for you to see.  
But he's little more than a boy.

Young David moved with strength and grace  
With the beauty of morning in his face.  
His eyes were steady and very clear  
They viewed the world without guilt or fear.  
Here was Israel's king.

The stern old Prophet's eyes became moist,  
But the stern old Prophet's heart rejoiced,  
For here was a youth who loved the Lord  
And would rule the Nation by His Word.  
This was David, the King.



And so with joy, and yet with dread,  
He poured holy oil on David's head.  
He feared, because he foresaw all  
That David must bear at the hands of Saul,  
But this was years away...  
Then Samuel departed for Ramah.

~~~~~

The Spirit of God had now left Saul
And was lost to him beyond recall.
An evil spirit, which caused him to sin,
Seeing his emptiness entered in,
And Saul became gravely ill.

For hours, he sat in a darkened room.
Immersed in silence and in gloom,
With no regard for what was holy,
He gave up his mind to melancholy -
Melancholy and madness.

His servants knew they must help the king.
Perhaps, if they found one who could sing
And on the lyre sweetly play,
It might help to drive Saul's sickness away.
At least it was worth a try.

One day a man suggested to them
They send for young David of Bethlehem,
A shepherd boy whom many had heard
Singing praises to the Lord,
While playing on his lyre.

When David arrived, Saul loved him on sight.
When David played, Saul's sickness took flight.
David became not only the sharer
Of all Saul's thoughts, but his armor bearer.
Saul loved him as a son.

~~~~~

Again, the Philistines invaded.  
And twice a day a Giant paraded  
Between the two armies - a defiant,  
Boastful, terrifying giant...  
Whose name was Goliath of Gath.

"Who will fight me? Who will dare?  
I'll give his flesh to the birds of the air!  
Have you no champion, no one at all?  
You're miserable cowards, you men of Saul!"  
They answered him never a word.

David had come to visit his brothers.  
He became ashamed of them and the others.  
"If none of you has the courage to kill  
This Philistine Giant... Then I will!"  
They thought him a bragging young fool.

He obtained Saul's blessing, then went to look  
For five smooth stones in a nearby brook.  
He knew this was no shepherd's game,  
But he trusted God and his own true aim.  
He'd already killed lion and bear.

When Goliath saw David drawing near -  
A youth who carried no sword or spear -  
Only armed with shepherd's sling and staff,  
He threw back his head with a gigantic laugh  
And regarded David with scorn.

"Am I a dog, that you came with a stick?  
If you fight me, your death will be quick!"  
David said only, "You come with a sword,  
But I come to you in the Name of the Lord -  
The Living God of Israel!"

David knew he had time for just one try.  
He whirled the sling and let the stone fly.  
Goliath fell without a sound  
And lay face downward on the ground,  
Made senseless by the stone.

Then David ran and struck him dead.  
With Goliath's own sword, David cut off his head.  
The Israelites gave a mighty cheer  
As the Philistine army fled in fear  
All the way back to Gath.  
In every city, bells were rung.  
David's name was on every tongue.  
A grateful Saul gave him command  
Of all the armies in the land.  
They'd fight to the death for David.

~~~~~

As David was riding home one day
After another successful foray,
He heard the musical instruments playing
And the voices of Israelite women singing,
SAUL HAS SLAIN HIS THOUSANDS
DAVID HAS SLAIN HIS TEN THOUSANDS
 DAVID! DAVID! DAVID!
Saul also heard.

At that moment Saul's heart turned
Away from David, and jealousy burned
Deep within him like a flame.
Jealousy - the sin of shame -
Burned like an evil flame.

Saul took away the high command
From David, and placed under his hand
A force of only a thousand men.
But David won battles, again and again
For the Lord was with him.

Once when David was playing, Saul
Tried to pin him to a wall.
David dodged the spear and fled.
But now he knew Saul wished him dead.
His life would never be safe.

Saul was now unstable as water.
He was glad as he heard that Michal, his daughter,
Loved David... and if she became his wife,
She may become a snare, to cost David his life.
So Saul arranged their marriage.

Saul sent armed men to their house one night
To capture David before it became light.
But Michal placed a manlike shape
Into David's bed. This let him escape,
Lowered from a window.

The Feast of the New Moon was now taking place,
Did David dare to show his face?
He secretly met with Jonathan,
His loyal friend and the King's eldest son,
And asked him to test Saul's mood.

At the very mention of David's name
Saul angrily said, "He's killed if he came."
Sadly, the two friends said goodbye,
For both knew that David would surely die
If he did not remain in hiding.

Having cheated death at the New Moon Feast,
David fled to the city of priests.
They fed him with bread sanctified to the Lord
And armed him with Goliath's own sword...
Not knowing of Saul's ill will.

Saul's fury now went out of control
And evil reached the depths of his soul.
When he heard how they had helped David, Saul
Summoned the Priest and killed them all -
Their wives and children as well.

For David, now, came bitter years
When he hid in the wilderness... And tears
Became his food by night and day.
Saul was the hunter. David was the prey.
And Saul gave him no peace.

Many came to join him -- the distressed,
The discontented, the oppressed.
From every part of Israel's land
They came and formed a loyal band
That followed wherever David led.

Once when he went into a cave to hide,
Saul and his army camped outside.
Then Saul entered the cave to rest -
Not knowing that David's men were pressed
To the innermost walls of the cave.

Saul was tired and soon he slept.
David looked down at his foe and wept.
Here was his chance to strike Saul dead,
But he cut off the skirt of his robe instead.
Then Saul, awakening, left.

David emerged from the cave and then
Ran after Saul and his three thousand men,
“See what I have, O King - your skirt!
I could have done you deadly hurt,
But you are the Lord's anointed.”

David bowed with his face to the earth,
"Now you have found me, but what am I worth?
What do you seek, when you come after me?
Do you seek a dead dog, do you seek a flea?
- I have never done you harm."

Saul saw a figure, unarmed and alone.
"Can that be your voice, David my son?"
He wept, and his empty heart was moved
As he looked at the man he had always loved
- greatly loved and hated.

"I've given you evil, and you return good.
You spared my life when I sought your blood.
Before the Lord, I cannot deny
That you are more righteous, by far, than I...
And the Lord will make you king.

"But this one thing you must promise me
That you will not cut off my posterity...
Not kill the children I have begotten...
That the name of Saul is not forgotten
And blotted from Israel."

David promised. And Saul withdrew.
He went in peace, but David knew
His jealousy would always burn
And with new hatred he would return.
So David went to his stronghold.

David was right to stay on his guard.
Saul continued to press him hard.
At last David felt that his only means
Of survival lay with the Philistines.
So he and his men went to Gath.

Although he'd killed many men of their nation,
The Philistines felt for him great admiration.
So fond of David had Achish grown
That he gave him a city of his own.
Now, Achish was the ruler of Gath.

The dogs of war were stirring again.
The Philistines mounted a great campaign
That would conquer Israel once and for all
And put an end to the reign of Saul.
And David knew of their plan.

Achish expected that, as David's thanks,
David would march in the Philistine's ranks.
David and his men could help them win
If they lifted their hands against their own kin -
Which David would never do.

The Philistine lords didn't share this belief,
But felt that David would bring them grief.
If he attacked them behind their lines
He could bring defeat to the Philistines.
So Achish sent David home.

~~~~~



Dread, that was like an icy pall,  
Now enveloped the once brave Saul.  
He feared the worst, but felt he must know  
Which way the coming battle would go.  
Triumph or defeat?

There was no holy man for him to consult...  
Also, he had destroyed the witch's cult...  
But a woman of Endor, it was said,  
Could call up spirits of the dead.  
Saul went to Endor.

The Witch of Endor was very afraid,  
But, finally, she called up Samuel's shade --  
That grim old prophet, beneath whose wing  
Saul had become anointed as king...  
And later renounced.  
The Prophet gave Saul no sympathy,  
"Tomorrow you will be with me.  
You'll be defeated, the battle lost,  
The land overrun by the Philistine host.  
You and your sons will be killed."

~~~~~

An arrow found Saul. He was in great pain,
And he knew that Jonathan had been slain.
"These heathen will not make sport of me!"
He cried out and fell heavily
On his bloody sword.

There were those who couldn't wait to bring
The news to David that now he was king;
They thought that David would rejoice.
Instead, he lifted up his voice
In sorrow for the friend of his youth
Who had stood beside him in honor and truth.

He sorrowed also for the tragic King
Whom he had loved, despite everything.
And this is the song that David sang.

~

The glory of Israel is slain
Upon her high places...
How are the mighty fallen!

From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back.
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
How are the mighty fallen!

Ballad of Elijah

Part I “The Still Small Voice”

Verse 1: Elijah was a prophet
Who lived in days of old.
Elijah listened to the Lord
And he did what he was told.
Yes, he did what he was told.

Refrain 1: Elijah, Elijah, he was a man of fire!
To fight the battles of the Lord
That was his desire.

Verse 2: There was a wicked, wicked queen
Whose name was Jezebel.
She turned the people away from God
And made them worship Baal.
A false old god named Baal.

Refrain 2: Jezebel, Jezebel, the queen from hell.
She ruled in ancient Israel.
The king was deathly afraid of his wife
And she led him into a wicked life.
Jezebel, Jezebel...

Verse 3: Elijah walked through the palace door
When she was on the throne.
Oh, he was gaunt and he was grim
And he was all alone.
Yes, he was all alone.

Verse 4: He said to her, “Your wicked ways
Bring down the wrath of the Lord,
So there will be no rain in all this land
Until I give the word,
Until I give the word.”

Repeat Refrain 1

Verse 5: Elijah escaped from the palace guard
And hid in the wilderness.
He said, “O Lord, please take my life
Because my life’s a mess.
My life is just a mess.”

Verse 6: “I’ll stay beside this little brook
Where I can quench my thirst,
But I know I’ll surely starve to death
If the Queen doesn’t kill me first.
If the Queen doesn’t kill me first.

Repeat Refrain 2

Verse 7: The good Lord knew that Elijah
Needed food to eat,
And twice a day the ravens came
To bring Elijah meat.
To bring Elijah meat.

Verse 8: The streams all dried and the cattle died.
There was famine in the land,
And many prophets of the Lord
Were killed at the Queen’s command.
At the wicked Queen’s command.

Repeat Refrain 2

Verse 9: They searched for Elijah high and low
So that he could bring the rain,
But the Lord kept Elijah out of sight
And their search was all in vain.
Yes, all in vain.

Repeat Refrain 1

~~~~~

Now Elijah had gone to a lonely cave  
That was near a mountain peak  
And there he waited patiently.  
He waited for the Lord to speak.  
First there came a mighty wind  
That caused the rocks to break,  
But the Lord wasn't in that mighty wind  
Or in the great earthquake.

The Lord wasn't in the consuming fire  
Or in the fearful noise.  
When the good Lord came to Elijah  
It was in a still small voice.

This is the story of a prophet  
That is forever true.  
As the Lord came to Elijah  
So He will come to you.

He will not come in a mighty wind  
That makes the rocks to break.  
He will not come in a mighty wind  
Or in a great earthquake.

He won't come with consuming fire  
Or with a fearful noise.  
If you seek the Lord, He will come to you  
In a still small voice.

## Part II<sup>1</sup> “The Widow”

Repeat Refrain 1

Elijah lived by the little brook  
Until the brook ran dry.  
Then the Lord said, “Leave this place  
Or you will surely die  
Under the burning sky.”

“In Zarephath a widow lives  
Who will care for you  
Until the day that I restore  
The rainfall and the dew.”

Elijah went to Zarephath.  
He had not long to wait.  
He saw a woman gathering sticks  
Outside the city gate.  
Outside the city gate.

---

<sup>1</sup> If this is not read with Part I, begin here with verses earlier marked 1-9.

He spoke to her, “You fear the Lord.  
From His Will you will not shrink.  
I am faint with thirst. I pray that you  
Will bring me water to drink.”

He drank the cup she offered him.  
“You are kind and good.  
I’ve traveled far without meat or bread.  
Bring me a morsel of food.”

“I cannot, Sir,” the woman cried.  
“By famine I am bereft.  
A handful of meal, some oil in a cruse  
Are all that I have left.”

“I’ll prepare a cake for my son and me.  
We’ll eat it and then we’ll die.  
I have no food to give you, Sir.  
Now you know the reason why.”

Elijah said, “You must trust the Lord,  
You must trust Him utterly,  
Go and prepare the little cake  
And give the cake to me.”

She did as he asked so he made his home  
With the Widow and her son.  
And the household all ate plentifully  
Till the days of famine were done.

Whenever the Widow of Zarephath went  
To draw from her little store,  
No matter how much she had taken away  
There was always more.

For the handful of meal was never spent,  
The oil in the cruse did not fail  
Because the women put her trust  
In the God of Israel.

Repeat Refrain 1

This is the lesson you must learn  
As did the Widow of old:  
What you give God with all your heart,  
He repays a thousand fold.



## JOSEPH

Joseph was a carpenter  
Who lived in Galilee.  
He was a just, God fearing man  
But sorrowful was he.

Joseph went into his house  
And lay down on the bed  
But when he closed his tired eyes  
All hope of slumber fled.

“Today I’ll end my betrothal,” he thought,  
“For Mary has broken her vow  
And it seems that she carries another man’s child.  
I cannot wed her now.

“This happened before she went to Judea.  
How did it come about?  
God in heaven help me bear  
All my anger and doubt!

“I’ll not expose her to public scorn  
Or harsh Judaic law  
That seems to punish those in whom  
It finds a moral flaw.

“As quietly as it can be done  
I’ll set sweet Mary aside.  
But all my life I’ll wish that she  
Could have been my bride.

“I’ve waited years for her to grow  
Into young womanhood.  
No girl in all of Galilee  
Was so beautiful and good.

“It may be some Roman soldier or slave  
Happened to pass by  
And found her in a lonely place  
Where no one heard her cry,

"But if she suffered such an act  
She has lost the memory.  
For strangely, nothing seems to have touched  
Her look of purity.

“Which only deepens as the child  
Nears its hour of birth.  
Mary has a quality  
Not quite of this earth.

“Soon I must go to Bethlehem  
There to be enrolled.  
Is there no end of Roman lust  
For our poor nation’s gold?

“I’m a just and simple man,  
A respected carpenter.  
Tomorrow I’ll do the thing I must...  
But what will become of her?”

He slept at last and in his dreams  
A radiant Angel came.  
The Angel stood beside his bed  
And spoke to him by name.

“Joseph, I have come from God  
To ease your troubled mind.  
Mary did not conceive her child  
By one of humankind.

“Of all the women in this world  
She is favored most.  
Mary has received this child  
From none but the Holy Ghost.

“Son of David, do not fear  
To take your Mary to wife.  
You must protect her and the child  
In this land of bitter strife.

“The child will grow into a man  
Who will change men’s lives like leaven.  
He will save men from their sins  
And show them the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Joseph awoke refreshed and at peace.

“To God all praises be!  
Now when I go to Bethlehem  
I’ll take my Mary with me!”

## THOMAS CALLED DIDYMUS

Fearful and heartsick, hiding from sight,  
The Apostles met on that first Easter night.

Like sheep with no shepherd they mourned the loss  
Of their Lord who had died upon a cross.

All but John remembered that they  
Had deserted Jesus and run away.

Ten Apostles were present, two not -  
One of these was Iscariot,

Hanged by his own guilty hand  
For betrayal too great to understand.

The other not present was Didymus  
Who is better known by the name of Thomas.

(When Jesus went to raise Lazarus, His friend,  
Thomas had known that this might be the end

And he said to the others, "Let us all go  
To Jerusalem with Him and die also.")

Although the air was heavy with gloom  
Excitement grew in that upper room.

From man to man went the whispered word,  
"He is risen! Some say they have seen the Lord!"

“He has escaped death’s cruel mesh!  
Magdalene saw Him in the flesh!”

As they were speaking of Jesus, He  
Appeared among them suddenly

In living proof that He was not dead.  
“Peace be unto you,” He said.

He instructed them quietly, calmed their fear,  
And showed them the wounds left by nails and spear.

Then He blessed them and left the room in the same  
Miraculous way in which he came.

~~~

But Thomas, still overcome with grief,
Heard their joyful news with disbelief -

“Sorrow has made your eyes deceive you,
I fear that I cannot believe you

Or dare to find truth in these wonderful tales
Unless I see the imprint of the nails

And with my hand feel the wounded side
Of my Master who was crucified.”

~~~

Eight days later, they met as before  
In the upper room. They had shut every door

And brought Thomas with them. Each felt his heart burn  
With the hope that Jesus would return

And Thomas would know that their story was true,  
Jesus had done what He promised to do:

On the third day He had left the tomb  
And appeared to them in the upper room.

~~~

The waiting was almost too much to bear,
But all at once the Lord was there.

He spoke to Thomas, "Come here and see
The marks of nails driven into me,

"Then thrust your hand into my side
And know I am truly He who died."

Thomas, who had been torn by doubt,
Did as He asked, and then cried out,

"MY LORD AND MY GOD! MY LORD AND MY GOD!"

"You believe I have risen from the dead
Because you have seen me," Jesus said.

“But blessed, I say, are all those who
Have not seen, but believe this is true.”

~~~

In a distant land Thomas sacrificed  
His own life for the cause of Christ.

He endured many hardships and much pain  
With a faith that never failed again.

## Matthew

He sat at the receipt of customs  
Collecting the tax that was due  
And bearing the scorn of his countrymen  
For he also was a Jew.

Intelligent, sensitive, scholarly,  
Known then as Levi,  
He might once have studied to be a scribe  
Or even a rabbi.

He writes almost nothing about himself  
And the facts that survive are few.  
So all we can do is speculate  
About the Apostle Matthew.

Could a desperate need or circumstance  
Have forced this young man  
To defy his people and become  
A despised publican?

He may have committed a ritual sin  
At some point in his past  
And the unforgiving Pharisees  
Have declared him an outcast.

Driven from the Synagogue  
Matthew soon would find  
That only the Romans offered him  
Employment of any kind.



As a Galilean, he may have been hired  
By Herod – not Herod the Great -  
But the Roman puppet who ordered John's head  
Brought to Salome on a plate.

Or could he merely have wanted great wealth?  
Many publicans, it is true,  
Lined their own pockets by charging far more  
Than the lawful revenue.

An outcast - Matthew's only friends  
Were publicans and sinners.  
He may have squandered his ill-gotten gains  
In giving them lavish dinners.

When Jesus came into the customs place,  
So dreaded by poor,  
It is hard to believe that He and Matthew  
Had never met before.

Matthew may have gone to hear Him teach  
Out of curiosity,  
Or witnessed one of the miracles  
While idly walking by.

Matthew must have been present when Jesus gave  
The Sermon on the Mount.  
How else could he have written for us  
So magnificently an account?  
As He spoke, Jesus may have watched Matthew's face  
And called him because He knew  
That Matthew had understood and would write  
A record that was True.

Jesus knew that Matthew had pondered long  
The Jewish writings of old,  
The Books of Moses, the Prophecies,  
And all that they foretold.

He would quote from them often in his Book  
And use his learning to prove  
That Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah  
Whom God had sent from above.

Was Matthew a secret conspirator  
Who plotted Rome's overthrow?  
An undercover Zealot, perhaps?  
We can never know.

For another struggle awaited him -  
He was chosen to play a role  
In the greatest battle to take place on earth,  
The battle for man's soul.

In Matthew's heart, a fire had been laid  
Long before Jesus came.  
This fire needed only a spark  
To set his life aflame.

And burn away all base desire,  
All thoughts of shame and hate -  
So when Jesus said to him, "Follow me."  
He did not hesitate.

## Miracle on the Jericho Road

As Jesus was walking on the Jericho Road  
Near where the Jordan River flowed,  
As Jesus and the Twelve were walking toward  
The City of Jerusalem...

A Blind Man was sitting by the side of that road  
Near where the Jordan River flowed.  
A Blind Man who carried a heavy load  
Of darkness and despair...

He heard Jesus coming and he heard the crowd.  
He heard Jesus coming and he cried aloud.  
They tried to silence him. He would not be cowed.  
He cried aloud to Jesus.

“Jesus, Jesus!” cried Bartimaeus.  
“Son of David, have mercy on me!  
Jesus, see me. Jesus, free me  
From my load of misery.”

Jesus heard that desperate cry  
And He did not pass the Blind Man by.  
He paused, and said quietly,  
“Bring the man to me.”

The Beggar cast his garment aside  
And in great haste accompanied his guide.  
With newfound hope he could not hide  
He heard the Voice of Jesus.

“What do you will that I do for you?”  
Jesus asked; but he already knew.  
He already knew what He would do  
As He spoke to Bartimaeus.

The Blind Man cried, “O Lord, if I might.  
Lord if I might receive my sight.  
Lord, if I might return to the light  
And see the world again.”

Jesus looked into the Blind Man’s soul  
And said, “Your faith has made you whole.  
Go in peace. You now are whole.”  
And at once Bartimaeus could SEE!  
At once Bartimaeus could SEE.

## Peter Walks on Water

The last of the multitude had been fed  
With two little fishes and five loaves of bread  
And Jesus went up in the hills to pray  
After He sent the Disciples away.

“But how will you join us across the Sea,  
The treacherous Sea of Galilee?  
How will you reach the other shore  
If we leave you neither boat nor oar?”

We will never know what our Lord replied  
But His followers sailed with the favorable tide.  
They climbed in the boat and put out to sea, for  
The water seemed peaceful and calm as could be.

But at nightfall they found that they were pinned  
Far out from land by a contrary wind.  
A storm arose. A fierce wind blew  
And panic gripped the little crew.

The storm grew worse as the hours went by.  
The wind was stronger, the waves were high.  
And then, in the late watches of the night,  
They saw a figure walking upright.

A figure was walking on the Sea,  
The treacherous Sea of Galilee.  
The Disciples cried, “A ghost! A ghost!  
Come to tell us that all is lost.”

But then they heard as the Figure drew near  
The voice of Jesus calling, "Have no fear.  
Behold, it is I, no ghost you see.  
I beg you make room in the boat for me."

Peter cried out, "Lord, if this is true,  
Allow me to walk on the water to you."  
The other Disciples were stricken dumb  
As Jesus said to him, "Yes, Peter. Come."

Peter bravely climbed out of the boat  
Trusting Jesus to keep him afloat.  
At first he walked with a confident stride.  
His eyes on the Lord, he forgot wind and tide.

But all at once he began to think  
Of his terrible danger... And started to sink.  
"O Master, Master, I'm going down!  
Please, dear Master, don't let me drown!"

Jesus quickly reached him and grasped his hand.  
"My friend, will you never understand?  
With your eyes on me you were never near death.  
Why did you have so little faith?"

Supported by the Lord's strong arm  
Peter walked to the boat without further harm.  
And at once the storm began to cease  
And the sky and the sea were again at peace.

Peter silently took an oar  
As the boat made its way toward the distant shore.  
But the other Disciples whispered in awe  
And one of them said, “Yesterday we saw

“Five thousand hungry people fed  
With a few little fishes and five loaves of bread.  
Then we saw Him calm the sea and save  
Brave Peter from a watery grave.

“With all the miracles He has done  
Who can He be but God’s own Son?”

## The Epileptic

Jesus and James, Peter, and John  
Came down from the Holy Place  
Where the Three saw the Lord's transfigured face  
And a radiance like the sun.

A multitude from the nearby town,  
Disciples and scribes in heated dispute,  
Many who knew Jesus by repute  
Were waiting for Him to come down.

From the crowd, there suddenly came a Man,  
"Master, my son is very sick.  
They say he is a lunatic.  
Oh, help him if you can!"

"An unclean spirit has possessed  
My only child almost from his birth.  
It often throws him to the earth,  
Giving him no rest.

"Seeking always to destroy  
It makes him fall into water or fire -  
Whatever the demon may desire.  
It will tear the life from my boy!"

Jesus said simply, "Bring him to me."  
He waited with Peter, James, and John  
Until the Man returned with his son,  
And the crowd moved closer to see.



The troubled boy convulsed again  
As Jesus came into the Demon's sight.  
Filled with fury and with spite,  
It wished to cause him more pain.

Jesus asked the father, "Do you believe  
That I can cast the Demon out?  
Do you believe, or do you doubt?  
Tell me if you believe."

The anguished man cried out in grief.  
He made no attempt to deceive,  
"Lord, I believe! Lord, I believe!  
Help thou my unbelief!"

Jesus had seen the Demon's attack  
And he spoke in His sternest tone,  
"Spirit, leave this boy alone.  
Go from him and never come back!"

Just before the Demon fled  
It threw the boy to the ground.  
There he lay without sight or sound.  
He lay as if he were dead.

But Jesus knew the spirit had gone  
In obedience to His command.  
He lifted the boy by the hand  
And gave the father back his son.

~~~

“You made the sickness go away
And healed the boy,” His Disciples cried.
“We could not help him, though we tried.
Why did we fail today?”

Jesus replied, “You had not enough faith,
And forgot that God is always there.
Such healing comes about through prayer
And faith that is stronger than death.

“If, believing, you ask the Father above.
He will give you whatever faith you need.
With faith, no more than a mustard seed,
You can cause a mountain to move.”

The Man Born Blind

The Disciples had come to Jerusalem.
As they walked where Jesus led
They saw a Man who was blind from birth
Begging for his bread.

“Master,” they said, “tell us if you will -
What caused this man to be blind?
Did his parents commit some terrible act
Or was it He who sinned?”

“It was neither of these,” Jesus replied.
“He is blind for one reason alone
That through him today the works of God
Might be clearly shown.”

As He spoke, Jesus bent down to the ground
And scooped up a handful of clay.
He mixed this with spittle and covered the eyes
Of the Beggar who heard Him say,

“Now go and wash in the Pool of Siloam
Until the clay is gone.”
With that, the Lord and His followers
Quietly moved on.

The Beggar made great haste to obey.
He could not do otherwise.
In the waters of Siloam’s pool
He washed his sightless eyes.

Something strange was happening to him.
Could it possibly be
That for the first time in his life
He was really able to SEE?

Wild with joy, he ran through the streets
Shouting at the people he passed,
“I see your faces! I see you move!
I have my sight at last!”

Neighbors who had known him for years
Thought confusedly,
“This is just someone who looks like him.”
But he said to them, “No, I am he.”

They took him to the Pharisees
Who treated him with scorn,
“You say that you were totally blind
From the day that you were born?

“And a prophet called Jesus opened your eyes?
He covered them with clay
And when you washed in the Pool of Siloam
Your blindness went away?

“Who is this Jesus and where is he now?”
They asked relentlessly.
The Beggar said, “I know nothing at all
But that I was blind and now I see.”

“Are you really the man who was born without sight?
Of that, we have great doubt!
We will send for the parents of him who begged
And very soon find out!”

The terrified parents told the truth,
“Yes, this is indeed our son,
But we know not how he received his sight
Or by whom the deed was done.

“HE IS OF AGE, ASK HIM!”

When they saw they were faced with a miracle
That they could not refute,
The Pharisees, who had legal minds,
At once began to dispute.

Some said, “Such a miracle must come from God.
There is no other way.”
But most of them argued, “No, not so.
This was done on the Sabbath Day

“When the Law of Moses forbids all work
To Israel’s women and men.
We will find a better answer here
If we talk to this Beggar again.”

Worn out with their questions, the Beggar said,
“I have told you all this before.
I was blind and Jesus made me see.
I can tell you nothing more.

“You want to know so much about this Man,
I begin to think that you
High and mighty Pharisees
Would be His disciples too!”

They replied with disdain, “We follow one man
And Moses is his name.
We know that HE came from God, but this fellow,
Who knows from whence HE came!”

With no lack of spirit, the Beggar laughed,
“Not since the world began
Have the eyes of one who was blind from birth
Been opened by any man.

“And you don’t think that Jesus comes from God?
How can you have any doubt?”
Unable to answer, the Pharisees
Angrily cast him out.

Hearing of this, Jesus went to him.
“Do you believe that someone
Who walks and talks like other men
Might really be God’s Son?”

The Beggar made a simple response,
“I can only say this:
I will gladly go and worship Him
If you show me who He is.”

Jesus said to the man He had healed,
“What I tell you is true.
You have already seen this Man
And he is now speaking to you.”

The Beggar had known this in his heart
And to him it was no surprise.
With utter trust, he looked into the face
Of the Man who had opened his eyes.

“LORD, I BELIEVE! LORD, I BELIEVE!”

“For such a cause I came into the world,”
Jesus said, “Because of Me
Those who think they have sight will be blind,
And the truly blind WILL SEE.”

Saul

At the head of a band of soldiers He marched
Vowing imprisonment and death
To the upstart Christians who had dared
To threaten his ancient faith.

Toward Damascus from Jerusalem
Saul of Tarsus marched that day.
He did not know that Christ Himself
Would meet him on the way.

A Jew of the Jews, a Benjamite,
He burned in a religious zeal
That was fanned into flame when He sat at the feet
Of the rabbi, Gamaliel.

He had heard of Disciples in Syria.
Armed with authority from the High Priest
He planned to arrest them, women and men
From the greatest to the least.

He believed that He would be pleasing God
If He rooted the blasphemous Christians out,
But in some corner of his mind
There flickered a tiny doubt.

For He had been one of that angry crowd
And had joined in their bloodthirsty cry.
Holding the coat of a man who threw stones
He had watched Young Stephen die.

He heard the First Martyr call upon Christ
As he yielded his spirit with bravery and grace.
And try as He would Saul could not forget
The look on Stephen's face.

But He pushed such troubling thoughts aside
And with increased fury plunged ahead
On a path of destruction and cruelty
That filled all Christians with dread.

They were close to Damascus and the day
Had not yet faded into night
When all at once around Saul shone
A bright and dazzling light.

Saul of Tarsus fell to the ground.
He could still hear, but he could not see.
A Voice spoke to him, "Saul, Saul,
Why do you persecute Me?"

In his heart He knew that the Voice was Christ
And yet He asked, "Lord, who are you?"
"I am Jesus of Nazareth. Why do you fight
Against what you know to be true?"

Saul gave no answer, but humbly asked,
"What do You want me to do, my Lord?"
"You must go to a house in the street called Straight
And there wait for My Word."

The light and the voice disappeared.
Saul struggled to his feet to find
That the world around him had suddenly turned black,
For He was totally blind.

The soldiers with him had seen the light
But had heard no voice and did not understand,
But they took him where He wished to go
Leading him by the hand.

Somewhere in Damascus there lived a Man
Devoted to Christ and very pious.
In a vision Jesus appeared to him,
“Hear Me, Ananias!

“I want you to go to a certain house
Where a man called Saul of Tarsus is staying.
Instruct him and heal him for He is blind.
He fasts and He is praying.”

When He heard to whom he was to go
Ananias cried out in great alarm.
“This man is your enemy, Lord!” he said.
“He has done your saints much harm!”

“Do not fear, Ananias,” Jesus replied
“Saul has been chosen especially by Me
To carry my name to Gentiles and Jews
Across the land and sea.”

In obedience to the Lord's command
The good Ananias made haste to arise.
When he laid his hands on the stricken Saul
The blindness fell from Saul's eyes.

He lived among Christians for many days
Heedless of what He had sacrificed.
And one day He stood up in the Synagogue
And preached the Risen Christ!

Open your Bible and read in ACTS
How the man whom we know by his Greek name of Paul
Changed from a hater of Christ to become
The greatest Apostle of all!

Lydia

Lydia, Lydia, seller of purple,
Of dyed purple to Roman and Greek,
On that long-ago day, as you stood by the river,
Praying to the Hebrew God... what did you seek?

You must have been searching, Seller of Purple,
For a faith high enough to meet your needs.
You had grown weary of pagan religions,
Their shallow gods, and their empty creeds.

The prayers of your women drew the attention
Of Paul and Silas as they passed by.
At God's command they had sailed from Troas
And come to the city of Philippi.

Paul, with the power of the Spirit,
Told you about the risen Lord.
He spoke of Christ's teaching and what He offered
To those who believed and followed His word.

What were your thoughts, O Ancient Lady?
What fervor in you did his speech arouse?
You became Paul's first convert in Europe
And he and Silas stayed at your house.

Here, a group of Christians gathered
As Paul, with a passion beyond any man's,
Built up the Church - to which he later
Wrote the book of PHILIPPIANS.

When Paul and Silas were beaten, imprisoned,
And told they must travel from Philippi,
They stopped at your house on the way from the City to
strengthen and bless you and say goodbye.

Were you martyred in the persecutions?
Or did you live to be honored and old?
You disappeared from the pages of history
And much of your story remains untold.

O Lydia - wealthy woman of business -
You knew how all of your goods should be priced.
Yet, freely you gave your life and your fortune
When, from Paul, you caught the fire of Christ!

Speak to us, Lady, across the ages!
Give us some of your courage and grace!
Our gods become shallow, creeds without meaning
And we are lost in the marketplace.

THE RULER'S DAUGHTER

One servant walked behind him,
Another walked ahead
As He traveled the road that lay along
The Jordan River bed.

For this journey, He wore a simple robe.
He did not want to attract
The attention of robbers or desperate men.
Twice before, He had been attacked.

He was Jairus, a man of importance
And great authority,
The ruler of a synagogue
In his native Galilee.

He had spent ten days in Jerusalem
Where He had business with Rome,
Ten days away from the Wife and Child
Who were waiting for him at home.

He smiled when He thought of his daughter.
She had her mother's eyes
That were childlike in their innocence
But infinitely wise.

He was taking home gifts for her birthday
When she would be twelve years old -
A clever toy for her delight,
A simple bracelet of gold.

At noon, they rested in a grove
Where other travelers joined them.
They were Galileans on their way
To visit Jerusalem.

They talked excitedly of a Young Man,
A Prophet - Jesus by name -
Who could open the eyes of the blind and heal
The lepers and the lame.

He preached the God of Abraham -
But a God who cared far less
For ritual and outward show
Than for mercy and righteousness.

The Ruler's heart within him burned
As He heard what the Young Man taught,
For this was the God He had tried to find!
This was the God He had sought!

They shared a meal of dates and bread.
Then the travelers were gone
And the Ruler with his followers
Steadily pressed on.

When they reached Galilee, He urged the men
To walk a little faster,
For over him had come a cold
Feeling of disaster.

From his house, they heard the dreaded sound
Of wailing for the dead.
Leaving the men and his mount behind,
The Ruler ran ahead.

The faces of his household
Confirmed his frantic fears.
His gentle wife came forward
And greeted him with tears.

“The Child was taken very ill
While happily at play.
Our prayers all went unanswered
And she grew worse every day.

“The doctors said her sickness
Was far beyond their power.
And just before you came, they said
That she could not live an hour.”

He went into the darkened room
Where his child lay on her bed
As white and motionless as if
She were already dead.

For a moment, He looked down at her
In utter disbelief,
But then He let himself give way
To wild and desperate grief.

He had thought this much-loved child would be
His joy for years to come.
How could He ever bring himself
To lay her in the tomb?

As He sorrowed for his daughter
Feeling his heart must break,
Suddenly and clearly
He heard a voice speak.

“You will find the Man called Jesus
In the marketplace.
Do not send a servant.
You must meet Him face to face.”

Jairus paused only long enough
To call out to his wife,
“I go to find Jesus, the only Man
Who can save our daughter’s life.”

As He rode, He would not let himself think
Of his daughter in her shroud.
And He found Jesus in the marketplace
Surrounded by a crowd.

He watched the Young Man perform miracles.
Overwhelmed by what He saw,
The Ruler - the man of authority -
Fell to the ground in awe.

Jesus approached and lifted up
The Ruler from his knees.
Quietly, He listened to
The anguished Father's pleas.

Yes, Jesus said, there was hope for the Child
And He would make haste to come.
With several of the Disciples,
He would follow the Ruler home.

But the crowd was unwilling to let Him go
And made a small delay.
And then an incident occurred
While Jesus was on the way.

A woman stood upon the street,
A woman who had endured
An issue of blood for twelve long years.
She thought, "I shall be cured

"If I can but touch the hem of his robe.
God give me the strength to try!"
Somehow, the woman accomplished this
As Jesus was passing by.

But He felt her touch, and felt also
The healing take its toll.
But He said to her only, "Be of good cheer.
Your faith has made you whole."

A man came from the Ruler's house.
He met them and sadly cried,
"You need not trouble the Master now,
Your daughter has just died."

Jesus made no move to turn back,
Giving the message no heed.
The group continued on their way
At even greater speed.

They came to the house where hired mourners
Their vigil of death were keeping.
Jesus said to them, "Give place! The Maid
Is not dead, but sleeping!"

The mourners tried to laugh him to scorn
But He sent them all away.
Then He went into the darkened room
Where the dead child lay.

He allowed no one to enter with Him
But the Little Girl's father and mother
And three Disciples - Peter and John,
And James who was John's brother.

The Ruler tried, but could not detect
Any sound of indrawn breath.
There was only the terrible quietness
Always caused by death.

Jesus took the little Girl by the hand
And said to her, "Maid, arise!"
At once She sat up in the bed
Opening her eyes.

Jesus then told the astonished parents
That they should give her food,
But when they tried to express to Him
Their joy and gratitude,

He commanded the Ruler and his wife
That they should tell no one.
He did not want the crowds to learn
Of the miracle He had done.

Wherever Christians gather
And the Gospel Books are read,
People hear the story of how the Lord
Raised a Little Girl from the dead.

The Twelve Apostles

There were twelve Apostles. Let's learn their names!
Peter and Andrew, John and James
Were two sets of brothers who fished in the Sea,
The stormy Sea of Galilee.

Closest to Jesus were these three:
Peter, James and John.
Peter, the leader and strongest one,
Lost his nerve and denied the Lord.
John lived the longest. James died by the sword.

There was Philip, who helped give out the food
When Jesus fed the multitude,
And there was Nathaniel, guileless and good.

Jesus chose a man called Bartholomew
And a tax collector whose name was Matthew
(His name was Levi in Hebrew.)

There was Thomas, famous for his doubt,
And there were two we know little about
Except that they seem to have several names:
A son of Alphaeus who was called James
And Simon the Canaanite - or Zealot.

Now we come to Judas Iscariot,
Though his is a name we'd like to miss.
He betrayed his Master with a kiss.
Judas was the first to die,
But he lives forever in infamy,
The traitor - Judas Iscariot!

These were the Twelve who answered God's call.
Try your best to remember the all!

The end