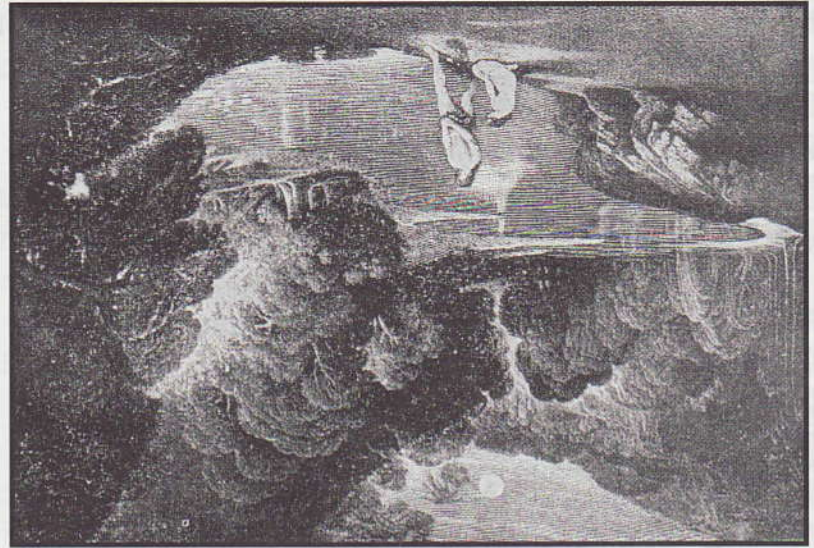


Covenant Ancestors



When the Lord God said,
"It is not good that the
man should be alone;
I will make him a helper
as his partner."
—Genesis 2:18



SESSION 1
COVENANT ANCESTORS

Adam and Eve: Beginning Together



words to remember

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help.

—Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

prayer Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For Labor Day
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 261

COMMENTARY

A team is a group of individuals working toward a common goal. In order to have a team everyone must cooperate. God put men and women on this earth to work together. "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.'" (Genesis 2:18) Since the beginning of time men and women have worked together. Adam and Eve worked side by side to tend the garden of Eden; they were doing God's will as a team.

One person cannot accomplish much, but a team can work wonders. A good example of a team is marriage. "The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity. . ." (BCP, p. 423) Other relationships, such as those in sports, families, friendships, and careers, work only with the help of each person. Those are teams where there is no "I," and everyone pulls their own weight and shares.

Molly, Grade 9

Youth Prayer

Thank you for every thing you have given us, especially for everyone else.

Thank you for making Adam and Eve, so humankind can work together to better serve you.

Thank you for making people able to do good and for us all to be better people.

Help us all to serve each other as well as you, and help everyone receive you as their Lord and Master. In your name we pray.

Amen.

Katie, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Genesis 1:26-27

Tuesday—Proverbs 31:10-11

Wednesday—I Samuel 25:32-33

Thursday—Isaiah 62:5

Friday—Luke 1:59-63

Saturday—Acts 18:1-3

voices



By the grace of God's name
May humanity find itself lifted
higher and higher.
In thy dispensation O Lord,
Let there be good in all
humanity.

*Guru Nanak,
founder of Sikhism*

What unites us is far greater
than what divides us as
families and friends and
Americans and spiritual
sojourners on this Earth.

Marian Wright Edelman

Three, helping each other,
will bear the burden of six.

Cuban Proverb





When the Lord said to Cain,
"Where is your brother Abel?"
He said,
"I do not know; am I my
brother's keeper?"
—Genesis 4:9



SESSION 2
COVENANT ANCESTORS



Cain & Abel: Brothers Apart

words to remember

But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind.

—James 3:14-16

prayer O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Human Family
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 815

COMMENTARY

In the first part of the reading, two brothers, Cain and Abel, both offer sacrifices to the Lord. The Lord is pleased with Abel's offering, but rejects Cain's. Cain is furious that the Lord preferred Abel's offering over his and jealous that Abel is more accepted. There is often rivalry among siblings to be liked better by their parents, or in this case, the Lord. Feelings of jealousy and rivalry are common and natural for siblings to have.

Cain deals with these feelings in a very bad manner when he kills Abel out in the field. In this case sibling rivalry led to a harsh and destructive end. Feelings of jealousy and rivalry should be dealt with properly. Siblings or even friends should tell each other if they are having a problem or feel jealous. They should talk out any problems and not resort to violence as Cain did.

Talking problems out and being open about each other's feelings is important in a relationship between siblings and friends. Relationships are not perfect: people may argue or be mad at each other, but the important thing is to deal with these feelings and have a good relationship.

Alan, Grade 9

Youth Prayer

God, please help us in our relationships with our siblings and friends. Help us get along with each other, control our feelings, and deal with emotions in a good way. Help us to talk about our problems and be open with each other. God, please guide us to make the right decisions dealing with siblings and friends. Amen.

Alan, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Genesis 37:9-11

Tuesday—Mark 10:35-45

Wednesday—Genesis 30:1-2

Thursday—Luke 10:38-42

Friday—Luke 15:11-32

Saturday—Wisdom of Solomon 10:9-10

voices



If [humans] were basically evil, who would bother to improve the world instead of giving it up as a bad job at the outset?

Van Wyck Brooks

We cannot do evil to others without doing it to ourselves.

Joseph Francois Eduard Desmahis

Give me strength to be the first to tender the healing word and the renewal of friendship, that the bonds of amity and the flow of charity may be strengthened for the good of [all people] and the furthering of thine eternal, loving purpose.

Cecil Hunt





—*Genesis 9:13*

have set my bow in the
clouds, and it shall be a sign
of the covenant between me
and the earth.

SESSION 3
COVENANT ANCESTORS

Noah: Starting Over



words to remember

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew
their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

—*Isaiah 40:31*

prayer Almighty God,
you have placed
in the skies the sign of your
covenant with all living things:
Grant that we, who are saved
through water and the Spirit, may
worthily offer to you our sacrifice
of thanksgiving; through Jesus
Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Flood
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 289

COMMENTARY

In the story of Noah's Ark, God created a flood that wiped out all living creatures in the world except for those on the ark. After the flood waters had subsided, God blessed Noah and all of his descendants and created a new covenant with them.

I believe that the purpose of the flood was a fresh start for the world and the opportunity to create a new covenant. After the flood, God promises "that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (*Genesis 9:11*). This agreement is often referred to as the Covenant of the Rainbow because of the rainbow that appeared after the 40 days of rain. God says that whenever clouds come over the earth and a rainbow appears, God will be reminded of the covenant with the creatures of the earth.

Philip, Grade 9

Youth Prayer

Dear Lord, please forgive our sins,
and remember the covenant of the rainbow.

Forgive our corrupt society,
and look past the violence that plagues us.

Understand that we will continue to try to do your will,
but as you well know we are not perfect.

Dear Lord, please forgive our sins,
and remember the covenant of the rainbow. *Amen.*

Philip, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Psalm 90:5-6

Tuesday—Psalm 103:2-5

Wednesday—Lamentations
5:19-21

Thursday—Zephaniah 3:16-17

Friday—Ephesians 4:22-24

Saturday—Titus 3:3-7

voices



To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds, and watch the renewal of life—this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a [person] can do.

Charles Dudley Warner

Now, while the antler of the eaves
Liquifies, drop by drop, I brood
On a Christian thing: unless the
leaves

Perish, the tree is not renewed.

Stanley Kunitz

To yield is to be preserved whole.

To be bent is to become straight.

To be empty is to be full.

To be worn out is to be renewed.

To be little is to possess.

To be plenty is to be perplexed.

The Way of Lao Tzu, #22



—Genesis 27:35

But he said, "Your brother
came deceitfully, and he has
taken away your blessing."

B



SESSION 4

COVENANT ANCESTORS

Jacob & Esau: Deceiving a Brother



words to remember

Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks deceit through the mouth.
They all speak friendly words to their neighbors,
but inwardly are planning to lay an ambush.
Shall I not punish them for these things? says
the Lord;
and shall I not bring retribution on a nation
such as this?

—Jeremiah 9:8-9

prayer Most merciful
God, we confess
that we have sinned against you in
thought, word, and deed, by what
we have done, and by what we
have left undone. We have not
loved you with our whole heart; we
have not loved our neighbors as
ourselves. We are truly sorry and
we humbly repent. For the sake of
your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy
on us and forgive us; that we may
delight in your will, and walk in
your ways, to the glory of your
Name. *Amen.*

Confession of Sin
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 79

COMMENTARY

"Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing." What kind of a brother would do this? A brother who despises? A brother who should not be a brother at all? This is what happened to Jacob and Esau.

Let's say you have a wonderful family—a loving mother, a dad and brother. You come home and find out that your brother has taken away the thing that means most to you—your inheritance—just like Jacob did to Esau. Jacob tricked his brother Esau into giving him his inheritance. Jacob then tricked his father into giving him the family blessing.

Deceit destroys the family. A family without deceit is a strong family but a family with deceit is not a family at all. Trust and loyalty are God's methods of keeping a family together. Each family member must be trustworthy, loyal, and obedient. These three qualities will keep a family strong and together through good times and bad.

Andrew, Grade 8

Youth Prayer

Dear God: Please help those who live their lives in deceit. Please help them to see the positive roles that loyalty, trust, and obedience have in carrying out your will in everyday living. *Amen.*

Andrew, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Genesis 37:31-34

Tuesday—Matthew 21:28-32

Wednesday—Genesis 50:15-17

Thursday—Matthew 5:23-24

Friday—Genesis 33:4-7

Saturday—Genesis 29:21-25

voices



Young man, Young man,
Your arm's too short to box
with God.

James Weldon Johnson

Everyone is the son or
daughter of his or her
own works.

Proverb of Mexico

We are never deceived: we
deceive ourselves.

Goethe

O, what a tangled web we
weave,
When first we practise to
deceive!

Sir Walter Scott



—Exodus 15:21

And Miriam sang to
them: "Sing to the Lord,
for he has triumphed
gloriously;
horse and rider he has
thrown into the sea."

A



COVENANT ANCESTORS
SESSION 5

Miriam: Giving Thanks



words to remember

Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

—Psalm 150:3-6

prayer O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, you once delivered by the power of your mighty arm your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation of all nations by the water of Baptism: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 289

COMMENTARY

Giving praise and thanksgiving are important because they help you appreciate what you have. You realize that you have a lot to thank God for when you remember all the good things happening in your life. Miriam, sister to Moses, gave praise and thanksgiving to God at the beginning of their 40-year journey. The Israelites had just crossed the Red Sea, and there was no way the Egyptians could reach them. Miriam and other women had a party to celebrate their freedom. They danced and sang in praise to God for delivering them from the Egyptians. She and the other women started their journey on a good note.

- Thanksgiving and praise are a starting place for your relationship with God. They help you feel comfortable talking to God. If you thank God for one thing each day, it will be automatic to go to God when you have a problem. Once you start giving thanks and praise to God, it is easier to talk to God when you're in trouble. God is a great listener, probably better than anybody you'll ever meet.

Catherine, Grade 9

Youth Prayer

Dear God, thank you for being there when we need you the most. Thank you for listening when we need to be heard. We thank you for loving us, even when we are wrong. We praise you for the lives you have given us and the great things you have done for us. We appreciate everything we have received from you, and give thanks. *Amen.*

Catherine, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—I Samuel 6:16-17

Tuesday—Nehemiah 12:27-29

Wednesday—Psalm 95:2-7

Thursday—Judith 16:13-16

Friday—Psalm 147:1-5

Saturday—II Corinthians 9:11-12

voices



A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues.

Cicero

Were there no God, we would be in this glorious world with grateful hearts: and no one to thank.

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Once you have danced, you always dance. You can't deny the gifts that God sends your way.

Judith Jamison



—Joshua 1:6

Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them.

B



SESSION 6

COVENANT ANCESTORS

Joshua: Claiming the Land



words to remember

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel: "Be strong and bold, for you are the one who will go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their ancestors to give them; and you will put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

—Deuteronomy 31:7-8

prayer

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our

heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For our Country
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 820

COMMENTARY

Achieving a goal requires you to have faith in your ability, strength and courage to attempt the goal, trust in yourself to make the correct choices, and the patience to stay with it even when things do not go the way you expect.

After the death of Moses, the Lord tells Joshua to lead his people to the promised land. The Lord promises to be with Joshua and not abandon him when things get difficult. The Lord tells Joshua if he trusts in the Lord and is strong and courageous, the land that was promised to his ancestors will be given to the people. Because of Joshua's faith in God's promise, he was able to lead the people to the promised land.

As you attempt each goal remember that all things come through the Lord. By believing in him you will be given the tools and ability to overcome huge difficulties and at the appropriate time will achieve your goal.

Matt, Grade 9

Youth Prayer

Dear God, give us the strength and courage to know that we can achieve all our goals through you. Teach us as you did Joshua that if we are strong in our belief and patient and trusting in you, in time any goal can be achieved.

Matt, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Numbers 14:6-10

Tuesday—Numbers 14:26-30

Wednesday—Numbers 27:18-20

Thursday—Deuteronomy 34:1-9

Friday—Sirach 10:4-5

Saturday—Hebrews 13:7-8

voices



I studied the lives of great men and famous women; and I found that the men and women who got to the top were those who did the jobs they had in hand, with everything they had of energy and enthusiasm and hard work.

Harry S. Truman

Show me the [person] you honor, and I will know what kind of [person] you are.

Thomas Carlyle

Among the weak the strongest is the one who doesn't forget weakness.

Proverb from Panama



When she said to him,
"How can you say, 'I love you,
when your heart is not with
me? You have mocked me
three times now and have not
told me what makes your
strength so great."
—Judges 16:15



SESSION 7

COVENANT ANCESTORS

Samson & Delilah: Ill-Fated Love



words to remember

Whoever betrays secrets destroys confidence,
and will never find a congenial friend.
Love your friend and keep faith with him;
but if you betray his secrets, do not follow
after him.
For as a person destroys his enemy,
so you have destroyed the friendship of your
neighbor.

—Sirach 27:16-18

prayer O God, the King
eternal, whose
light divides the day from the night
and turns the shadow of death into
the morning: Drive far from us all
wrong desires, incline our hearts
to keep your law, and guide our
feet into the way of peace; that,
having done your will with cheer-
fulness during the day, we may,
when night comes, rejoice to give
you thanks; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for the Renewal of Life
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 99

COMMENTARY

How much would you be willing to risk for love?

When Samson told Delilah his secret, it never crossed his mind that she would betray him. This is what can happen when we experience false love.

What happened with Samson and Delilah took place many years ago but similar situations still happen today. As teenagers, we can say we love someone, but do we really mean it? How much are we willing to lose to be able to share a relationship with someone? When searching for love, we often lose sight of what is really important to us and are sometimes drawn away from God and other people we care about.

Knowing this, it's very important to be able to tell the difference between real love and false love. Remember what happened to Samson and make sure you don't let the same thing happen to you.

Lauren, Grade 9

Youth Prayer

Dear God, we pray that you will guide us when we are faced with making decisions concerning love. Please help us to determine what is true and what is false and help us to hold on to what is important. *Amen.*

Lauren, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—1 Chronicles 12:16-17

Tuesday—Isaiah 31:6

Wednesday—4 Maccabees
13:16-18

Thursday—Psalm 144:9-11

Friday—Acts 7:51-53

Saturday—Luke 22:47-48

voices



Love and prudence are absolutely incompatible.

Proverb of Bolivia

Whatever deceives seems to produce a magical enchantment.

Plato

It is difficult not to be unjust to what one loves.

Oscar Wilde

Love demands all, and has a right to all.

Ludwig von Beethoven



—1 Kings 18:37

answer me, O Lord,
people may know that you,
O Lord, are God, and that
you have turned their
hearts back.

A

COVENANT ANCESTORS
SESSION 8



Elijah: Standing for God

words to remember

If you do not stand firm in faith,
you shall not stand at all.

—Isaiah 7:9b

prayer God our Father,
you see your
children growing up in an
unsteady and confusing world:
Show them that your ways give
more life than the ways of the
world, and that following you is
better than chasing after
selfish goals. Help them to take
failure, not as a measure of their
worth, but as a chance for a new
start. Give them strength to hold
their faith in you, and to keep alive
their joy in your creation; through
Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Young Persons
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 829

COMMENTARY

The scripture passage in *1 Kings 18* applies to the youth of today in the form of peer pressure. There are many false prophets among us today pretending to be our friends. By remembering and following the Ten Commandments each day, we will surely follow in Christ's footsteps. Just as Elijah led the people who were worshipping Baal away from evil and back to God, we will lead better lives if we follow Christ's example free of outside pressures.

Lauren, Grade 7

Youth Prayer

Dear Lord, as it says in *1 Kings*, chapter 18, those who believe in God will not be led astray by false prophets. Teach us to recognize those who are not our friends and are out to harm us by their words or through their actions. Please Lord, guide us in the right direction; help us to think for ourselves and not be swayed by others. Keep us strong in our convictions and help us to remember the difference between right and wrong. *Amen.*

Lauren, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Isaiah 50:7-9

Tuesday—Daniel 11:31-35

Wednesday—Sirach 5:10-12

Thursday—1 Corinthians 16:13

Friday—Ephesians 6:10-17

Saturday—1 Peter 5:6-12

voices

“

I don't know what the future may hold, but I know who holds the future.

Ralph Abernathy

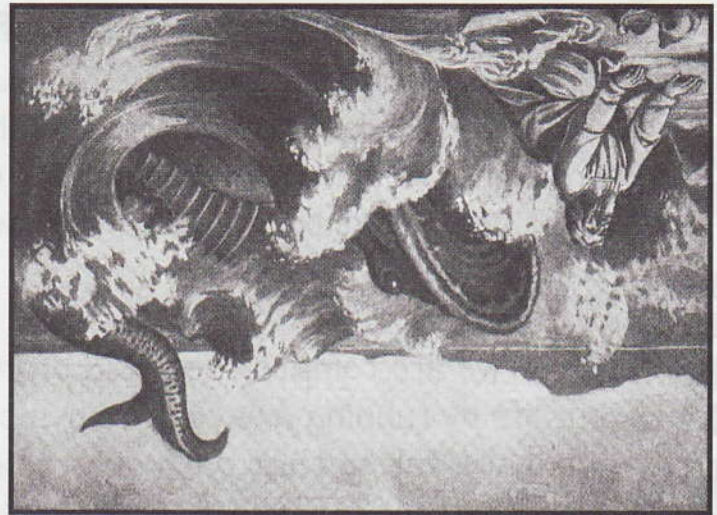
It gets dark sometimes, but the morning comes. Don't you surrender. Suffering breeds character. Character breeds faith. In the end faith will not be disappointed.

Jesse Jackson

[People] who have never been in danger cannot answer for [their] courage.

La Rochefoucauld

”



But Jonah set out to flee to
Tarshish from the presence
of the Lord.
—Jonah 1:3a

B

SESSION 9

COVENANT ANCESTORS

Jonah: Running Away



words to remember

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, "Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. . . . But the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. . . . Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land. . . . The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.

—Jonah 1:1-3a; 17; 2:10; 3:1-3a

prayer Dear People of God: Our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death, and become heirs with him of everlasting life.

We pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs.

From the Solemn Collects for Good Friday
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 277

COMMENTARY

God places obstacles in our life

to make us more caring, understanding, and strong. When we are able to solve our problems, we become more mature. God gives us joy, but to understand it we must know sorrow.

Often we are tempted to avoid problems in our life by running away both physically and mentally. Taking that path only causes more problems. For example, if you procrastinate, you'll just have a bigger workload, less time, and a more stressful situation. Avoiding a problem makes it harder in the long run. Through prayer God will help us overcome our problems.

Rachel, Grade 7

Youth Prayer

Dear God, we pray that we can handle whatever obstacle is set in front of us. Help us to be strong and conquer it. Also, help us to understand that even when we run away, you will always watch over us with love and guide us back. *Amen.*

Rachel, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Nehemiah 6:10-12
Tuesday—Jeremiah 17:14-16
Wednesday—Sirach 39:18-21

Thursday—3 Maccabees 6:7-9
Friday—Matthew 12:38-41
Saturday—Philemon 1:10-16

voices



Fear is faithlessness.

George MacDonald

[People] are punished by their sins, not for them.

Elbert Hubbard

You need a change of soul rather than a change of climate.

Seneca

A lie runs until it's overtaken by truth.

Proverb of Cuba

