

Today's Bible Verses

31 OCTOBER 2018

Today's 2 verses, read in order, are Part 2 of the Psalmist's emphatic praise of his God.

a "The mighty King loves justice. You have established fairness; You have administered justice and righteousness in Jacob."

Psalm 99:4 (1 of 2 for Oct 31)

b "Exalt Yahweh our God; bow in worship at His footstool. He is holy."

Psalm 99:5 (2 of 2 for Oct 31)

(ALL VERSES ARE EXCERPTED FROM THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE, HCSB.)

The Bible verses in the box above are this day's verses which I selected for my daily posting on both [FACEBOOK](#) and [TWITTER](#).

SEE ALSO:

ChristOurPassover.org

ADDITIONAL VERSES:

A New Series!

HANDEL'S *Messiah*

One of the most powerful, beautiful, sublime, and Biblically correct works of art is *Messiah* by German-turned-English composer George Friedrich Handel. Composed in a 24-day burst of inspiration in 1741, *Messiah* has become one of the most popular of "classical" music's religious expressions.

Handel's friend Charles Jennens, a wealthy landowner and devout Anglican, created the text for *Messiah* directly from Scripture. *Messiah* is therefore a rich (and richly Biblical) digest of the life, ministry, death, and future kingdom of Jesus the Christ. In this series of "Additional Verses," we will read (and, if you like, listen to) the original text of Handel's work – **AND** we will mirror them with an expanded, context-laden study of the Scriptures surrounding those Jennens chose and Handel set to music.

We will work our way through the entire text, day by day – as I have done in the section immediately below this block of text. In future issues, this introductory

text will appear **below the double column Scriptures**, so that the first thing you see will be *Messiah* verse study every day.

You will find each day's excerpt from Handel's libretto on the left, and the expanded (but wholly Biblical) context for each of the musical numbers on the right. In addition to the Scripture in the right column, **I will add periodic notes and thought questions, which you will always find in this burgundy color.**

I have designed it so that either column can be read straight down, in order to get the narrative (left column for Handel's message in his music; right column to see that message in magnified Biblical context). I have also put each musical number in its own row, so you may read across the columns for each selection to compare the Handel/Jennens text with the HCSB translation with context.

I have added a special bonus to this series: If you should wish to **listen** to a scintillating performance of the musical number in each day's section of Handel's *Messiah*, there are links in the left column you can use to take you there! I would listen, if I were you. (There is more information on the audio files and *Messiah* below.)

At the end of his 259-page manuscript of *Messiah*, Handel wrote the letters "SDG" — *Soli Deo Gloria*, "To God alone the glory." Let us approach the inspired words and glorious music with this same devotion.

*Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
The kingdom of this world is become
the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ;
and He shall reign for ever and ever.
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
Hallelujah!*

PART ONE

1. [Sinfonia \(Overture\)](#)

2. [Accompagnato Tenor](#)

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

PART 1a: Messianic Prophecies

HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of Yahweh of Hosts: 'The time will certainly come when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon; nothing will be left,' says Yahweh. 'Some of your descendants who come from you will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

"Comfort, comfort My people," says your God.

"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and announce to her that her time of forced labor is over, her iniquity has been pardoned, and she has received from Yahweh's hand double for all her sins."

A voice of one crying out:

Prepare the way of Yahweh in the wilderness; make a straight highway for our God in the desert.

ISAIAH 39:5-7;40:1-3

Jennens excerpted the "Comfort ye" portion of Isaiah's prophecy because of its obvious Messianic message. But notice that it is nestled inside a message Isaiah is delivering from God to Judah's King Hezekiah about the

imminent Babylonian invasion and captivity. God would later free Judah from Babylon, just as Messiah would release the world from its slavery to sin. Why do you think God so often chose to make “dual” messages such as this? Does it give additional depth to both messages to know that they are linked by God like this? The prophecies continue in the verses below.

3. Air Tenor

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

*Every valley will be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill will be leveled;
the uneven ground will become smooth
and the rough places, a plain.*

ISAIAH 40:4

Since you now know that these verses are part of a dual prophetic warning and message of redemption, how do you interpret God's specific mention of lifting valleys, leveling mountains, smoothing rough roads and rough places? What symbolic (spiritual) message do you read into them as relating to the coming of Messiah?

4. Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

*And the glory of Yahweh will appear,
and all humanity together will see it,
for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.
Zion, herald of good news,
go up on a high mountain.
Jerusalem, herald of good news,
raise your voice loudly.
Raise it, do not be afraid!
Say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”
See, the Lord Yahweh comes with strength,
and His power establishes His rule.
His reward is with Him,
and His gifts accompany Him.
Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
Yahweh is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the whole earth.
He never grows faint or weary;
there is no limit to His understanding.
He gives strength to the weary
and strengthens the powerless.
Youths may faint and grow weary,
and young men stumble and fall,
but those who trust in Yahweh
will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary;
they will walk and not faint.*

ISAIAH 40:5,9-10, 28-31

Isaiah tells us that the “glory of Yahweh” will be revealed and “all flesh shall see it together.” From there, he talks of the Lord Yahweh coming in strength and power. Has this prophecy now made a third leap, from the Babylonian captivity, to the earthly ministry of Jesus the Christ, and finally to His return to rule over all of His creation? What underlying or hidden messages do you draw from this? Does it say anything about the relationship of God to time as we know it? Are there things we should be learning about this series of events

that might not be obvious if they were each in entirely separate prophecies?



ADDITIONAL NOTES ON HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Charles Jennens (right) pulled together the OT and NT passages that became the “little book” (Italian: *Libretto*) for his friend, composer **George Friedrich Handel** (left) to use in his massive choral work, *Messiah*.

The libretto compiled by Jennens comprises passages from the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible and Psalms from the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (which come



from the poetic 1535 Miles Coverdale translation).

For performance purposes, Handel divided the work into three sections, but to suit our study here, I have chosen to break it up into these five:

1. Messianic Prophecies
2. Birth of Messiah
3. Ministry of Messiah
4. Death of Messiah
5. Resurrection and Triumphal Return

As Christians, we share a belief in the inspiration of Scripture, and so a study of these “Additional Verses” makes perfect sense, I believe, in the context of these daily emails. However, we have the added bonus in this case of the gloriously and sublimely beautiful music associated with our study. Handel’s *Messiah* sits among my top five or so favorite musical works – ever. I have attended many live performances of it (notably in Duke Chapel in Durham, NC), and I own and listen to multiple versions of it in my vinyl and CD collections.

I never even come close to tiring of the work, and am always lifted up in both lyrical and spiritual realms by it. If you are not familiar with it (except maybe for the universally loved “Hallelujah” Chorus), then do yourself a favor and listen to it. If you already know and love it, listen to the recording I’ve linked to in this study.

(The links are found in the left column, in the description of each selection. Just click, and it will open your browser, take you to YouTube, and play that selection. I absolutely encourage you to use good quality headphones!)

As a result of the generosity of its publisher who made the recording available online, we have the opportunity to marry our study of the text with one of the greatest, truly classic recordings of *Messiah* of all time. (There is complete information about this recording in the Credits section, at the bottom of this email.)

I would welcome any comments or questions you may have about this (admittedly unusual) form of Bible study. Thank you!

USAGE OF THE NAME OF GOD

As I do in all my Daily and Additional Verses, whenever an OT passage contains the four-letter Name of God יהוה (transliteration: YHVH or YHWH), I change the translation from The LORD to Yahweh.

I don’t do this for reasons of doctrine (or because I think my prayers won’t be heard if I don’t pronounce God’s name correctly!) – but simply because in the original Hebrew, **the word is a proper name**. (See Exodus 3:15 below.)

And as such, I believe to read the text in a way that uses a proper name (and not a title, like Lord) conveys more accurate information. Paul told us that “All Scripture is inspired by God,” and so why wouldn’t we want to read it the way He inspired it? While it is true that the correct pronunciation of YHWH has been lost, “Yahweh” is probably our era’s most commonly used equivalent.

God also said to Moses, "Say this to the Israelites: Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation."
[Exodus 3:15]

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable
for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness,
so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 (HCSB)

The additional verses which are below the Daily Verses will only appear in these emails (which are also posted on some websites). The current series (began 31 October 2018) of these "Additional Verses" takes the Scriptural words from the great choral work *Messiah* by Handel and uses them as a springboard to examine the context of the birth, ministry, character, death, and Kingdom of Jesus the Christ.

If you know of others who would like to receive these Daily Verses emails – free of charge, of course – just have them send me their email address. I will never allow anyone but me to see or to use the email addresses entrusted to me, and I will use them only for the purpose of these Daily Verses. Promise.

–GBP2

How Did All of This Get Started?

In early 2017, I wrote a computer app that "knows" all 66 books and 1189 chapters which the Bible comprises. When run, it selects a totally random chapter in the Bible, and keeps track of the ones that have been selected. That way, I can work my way through all 1189 chapters, without the app ever giving me a duplicate.

I first used this for Bible study, and later decided that choosing one or more verses from each chapter would make a good series of Facebook posts.

I began posting them on December 8, 2017, and have been doing it daily ever since. I later added them to my Twitter account, and am now sending them by email, for those who prefer to get them this way.

TO UNSUBSCRIBE:

If you do not wish to receive these daily emails, please feel free any time to hit "Reply" and tell me. I know that mailbox clutter is greatly annoying, and that is certainly not my intention for this!



Research for this publication was assisted by Faithlife Corporation's [Logos Bible Software 7](#).

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the [Holman Christian Standard Bible \(HCSB\)](#). Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers.

CREDITS:

Portrait of G.F. Handel: attrib. Balthasar Denner (1685-1749); National Portrait Gallery, London (75 x 63 cm).

Portrait of Chas. Jennens: Thomas Hudson (1701-1779); Handel & Hendrix, London (122 x 98 cm).

Handel: Messiah (recording): L'Oiseau-Lyre (Decca) edition (1991), provided to YouTube by Universal Music Group North America. Judith Nelson, Emma Kirkby, Carolyn Watkinson, Paul Elliott, David Thomas; Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford; The Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood, director.