

E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom

The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near.
Change the way you think and act, and believe the Good News.”
Mark 1:15 GW

- **LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT**
- **STORM CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON**
- **CHILDREN MURDERERS**
- **NOW IS THE TIME**
- **COME YE THANKFUL PEOPLE**

DEDICATED TO SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S COMING KINGDOM TO BE ESTABLISHED WHEN CHRIST RETURNS



Editor's Note

Co-Editors: Kent H. Ross Wally Winner

U.S. Elections

After months, even years, literally, we have come to the end of a tortuous path that has lead to the election of the United States' President for the next four years, 2013-2017.

At this point in may be Barack Obama who is re-elected, or Mitt Romney who will assume the leadership of this nation. While not the only nation in the world, the prominence of the U.S. certainly also weighs on the rest of the world.

It probably isn't this editor's desire to try and suggest one of these, or some of the lesser candidates who are also running for the office, as the best or a better choice. I certainly have my opinion, and hope that those of you who can vote, will be wise in your decision.

An article in this issue addresses a Letter to the President. Interestingly this originated before the 2008 Presidential election. Not aimed at any one, Seth Ross' article has great advice for leaders.

I think if one wins, it could easily determine the future events of the world very quickly, while if another wins, the future may be slower in developing. By that I mean, God is in control.

While I have my preference as to a leader for this nation for the next four years, God's Plan, obviously, may take precedence. I say "may" because God has postpone immediate judgment in times past to allow for repentance, as in Nineveh's case (see last month's editorial), or He may say, "It has gone too far. It is time for Judgment to begin."

In either case, as a son in His Family, I will accede to His perfect knowledge. If judgment is allowed to be postponed, we, His people, must use the time wisely to snatch some from the fire (Jude 23).

If it has gone too far, and judgment is determined to begin, we, His people, must prepare one another, strengthen one another, encourage one another for a time of testing, called by some "the Great Tribulation", hoping and praying for the immkient return of Christ for His people.

Middle East

War doesn't seem to be on the immediate horizon, as it has for the past few months. The tensions have eased . . . somewhat.

The leadership in Iran continues its rancorous cacophonies demanding the annihilation of the nation of Israel. There is no logic to what they say.

Interestingly, they insist it is the Jews who are latecomers to the area, seemingly unaware that Abraham, father to Ishmael, from whom the Arabs spring, is also father to Isaac, from whom the Jewish people spring.

Israel, no longer certain of the friendship of the United States, is warily watching development of Iran's nuclear capabilities. Some here in the United States seem to think Israel is over-reacting, but they forget the Cuban missile crisis that nearly came to open warfare between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

David Krogh's message in this issue, "Storm Clouds On the Horizon" addresses this Sign of the Times and five others. We've also included an old article from a 1967 issue of the old Restitution Herald that was a response to the Israeli-Egyptian conflict of that year. And our co-editor, Wally Winner, will also address prophetic issues in this issue of the E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom.

Thanksgiving

At the end of this month my calendar shows we will be celebrating Thanksgiving on November 22. It seems, though, we may not be able to squeeze much in between Halloween and Christmas.

Halloween, whether it was ever truly innocent fun or not, has taken on a whole new dimension in recent years. You can't just dig out an old sheet, or one of Dad's old coats and battered hats for your costume to go around your neighborhood and ask "Trick or Treat."

Now we have individual stores just for Halloween costumes . . . not just for children, though those too have to be elaborate, but also increasingly provocative adult costumes for their own parties. Wal-Mart, Target and Meijer's around here are inundated with candies for giving out . . . not penny candy, or apples, or popcorn balls, all of which seem to be disdained in favor of full-sized candy-bars.

And now with the shelves denuded of Halloween goodies, except for the 1/2 prices baskets, we're confronted with the first of the Christmas excesses. Section upon section of the major stores are given over to Christmas toys, mostly for children, but some shelves are for adults. There is another section for lights and ornaments, trees and wreaths. Oh, there are also the shelves laden with Christmas cards, and shaving lotions and bath salts . . . ad nauseum, ad infinitum!

Notice that the toys are no longer \$5, or even \$10. Now you can maybe find some for \$20 or \$30. Of course those are not the choice gifts. No, those can range from \$75 to \$300. If you can't quite afford it, they've brought back "lay-away" so you can overspend your budget and not feel too bad about it . . . until you get home and find those bills in the mail.

Well, two things:

- 1) Let me be one of the first to wish you a "Merry and Blessed Christmas," if I forget to do it later. Maybe we can all find a spot for the Christ in our Christmases' and
- 2) Have a Happy Thanksgiving. It's this month, I think. Can you find 25 or even 50 things for which you are truly thankful? Be sure and read Rex Cain's article on real Thanksgiving.

Table of Contents



Editorial

Page 2

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

Seth Ross

Page 5

STORM CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

David Krogh

Page 10

FOURTH ANNUAL WENATCHEE PROPHECY CONFERENCE

Page 16

CHILDREN MURDERERS

Wally Winner

Page 17

NOW IS THE TIME

Harold Doan

Page 20

LITTLE BLESSINGS FROM HEAVEN

Peggy Winner

Page 22

COME YE THANKFUL PEOPLE

Rex Cain

Page 24



Letter to the Next President

By Seth Ross

During the election season, I'm reminded that there are two types of people. First, there are those who are totally energized by the chaos, debates, and the entire political process. Second, there are those who wish the whole thing would just go away, so they can get back to regular life. The irony is that, generally, those people tend to marry each other.

Maybe you're the person who listens to a debate or speech on TV, and you talk back to the TV. Before long, you mute the TV, so they don't interrupt you as you talk. You may not have all the facts, but you sure have all the answers. Or maybe you're the person who dreads the entire election year. You just want to fast forward through it all. You're not apathetic or uninterested, it's just how you're wired.

Ever notice that when your candidate is speaking, he or she has the greatest ideas, he or she is the most reasonable arguments, and we'd all be better off if we just listened. And when the other candidate speaks... well, he or she is a liar. "I can just tell, look at 'em... lying!"

Regardless of where fall politically, the Old Testament is filled with stories where an advisor goes to person in power or political position, to give advice. One of those stories is found in the book of Daniel. It's the story of Nebuchadnezzar. It happens during a period of history when Israel was being punished by God. He had warned them, 'Obey, or I'll judge you and allow a foreign attack & invasion. You'll go into captivity for a period of time.' This story takes place during that captivity.

King Nebuchadnezzar was a brilliant strategist. Rather than kill everyone in a conquered territory & destroy everything, he would find the best & brightest locals. They would be taken back to Babylon & even allow them to hold positions of power in his kingdom. He surrounded himself with the world's best & brightest. When he conquered Jerusalem, those promising individuals that were taken to Babylon included Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Over time, they rose to high positions in the government, advising the most powerful man in the world.

Things were going great for Nebuchadnezzar, and in the midst of this success he had a dream that rocked him to his core. He dreamed of a giant tree, under which all the animals of the earth came to live & find rest. They had plenty to eat, and the tree provided all they needed. The entire world was at peace. Then he heard a loud voice say, 'Cut down the tree.' And the tree gets cut down. The voice said, 'Scatter the animals.' And the animals scattered. The only thing remaining is a stump. Then the voice decrees he will lose his mind & live among animals, *'so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the*

lowliest of men.' (Dan 4:4-17). Quite a statement to make to the man who believes HE is the Most High.

King Nebuchadnezzar awakens fearful, so he calls in all his smartest guys and asks, 'What's this dream mean?' All of them say, 'Wow, we have no idea.' Finally Daniel is brought in to hear the dream. After hearing the dream, he says to the king, 'Ooh, I wish your enemies had this dream. It's not good. I can tell you what it means, but it's bad for you.'



The fact that Daniel refers to God as the Most High is important. At this point in history, if you had asked the average person on the street who was the most powerful God, the answer you would most likely hear was 'Marduk.' This Babylonian God was considered the strongest God, because Babylon was the strongest empire. In fact, the God of the Jews was essentially out of business. His nation had been over run, His Temple had been torn down, and Judaism had stopped functioning. The God of Israel was 'out of business.'

And there stood Daniel, delivering a huge blow to Nebuchadnezzar's ego by saying, 'I know a God who is bigger than Marduk, and He's judging you. He's making a point during our captivity, because He wants the world to know He's alive and well. He's just biding his time.' So God shows up in the seat of world power & says to the most powerful man in the world, 'You're not in control. I let you conquer Israel.'

Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar, 'It doesn't have to be this way. If you repent, if you're more just as a king, if you're more considerate of the poor, if you make changes, if you're not so arrogant, maybe God will relent.' But as Nebuchadnezzar hears the interpretation of the dream, he may have thought, 'Eat grass with the animals? What? Ha! I'm not worried. I'm the most powerful man in the world!' So he disregards the dream & Daniel's advice.

Time passes and nothing happens to the king. Then a year later, he stands on a balcony of the palace surveying his city and thinks, 'Am I great, or what? I worked hard, assembled great people, and I've achieved so much.' And God finally decides to act. A voice from heaven says, 'I'm taking your authority from you, and you'll live with the animals.' The king may have thought, 'You can't take it. I earned it! It's MINE.' But that was THE POINT. The Most High is God over ALL the kingdoms of earth, and He gives power to whomever He chooses. God might say, 'The reason you're king is that I allowed it.'

At that moment, Nebuchadnezzar was confronted with perhaps the most important leadership principle. It's one every President ought to understand: Leadership is a stewardship. Any leadership really.... family, business, organization, church, team, etc. Leadership is a stewardship. It's temporary, and you're accountable. Any man or woman who is responsible for others only has that responsibility because God has enabled them or empowered them to lead. That means that they're accountable, because it was given to them. It also means it's temporary, for it can be taken away too. So God says to Nebuchadnezzar, 'I'm taking away your leadership, because you don't realize it's not yours.'

Nebuchadnezzar loses his mental faculties, and his officials enter to find this once-proud & competent man on the ground acting like an animal. The palace may have kept it quiet for a while, hoping the king's condition wouldn't become known. But over time, as with any administration, the news leaked out. But it actually became part of his legacy. In Daniel, we find the king telling the story in his own words. Why? To tell the world what he learned... that the Most High is over all kingdoms.



Nebuchadnezzar was restored & concluded that no man can question God. We just can't comprehend Him.

Great story, but it doesn't end there. Eventually Nebuchadnezzar dies, and his son takes the throne. By this time, Babylon's power is beginning to wane, and a new empire, Persia, was nipping at the edges of the kingdom. Babylon & Persia had running battles, and then halfway through his reign, the king decides to retire. Very unusual. Mostly kings were betrayed, killed, died in battle, died from illness, or were deposed. Nobody resigns. But he did, and he gave the throne to his son, Belshazzar.

Despite the kingdom crumbling at the edges, he rules with the arrogance of his grandfather's early years, while living a life of decadence. Then there was an amazing event on October 12, 538 BC. The Persians had reached the capital city of Babylon, surrounded it, and laid siege to it. Inside the city were Belshazzar, his army, and his subjects. In his arrogance, the king remained confident there was no way the Persians could overthrow his mighty city.

That evening he threw a big party. A party to send a message to the Persians: 'We have plenty of food & wine. You sit outside the walls in the dark with no food. We have the River Euphrates running through the city and will not lack water. I want to flaunt my power and position while you wait.'

In the center of the banquet hall was a large statue of Marduk. During the party, Belshazzar sends servants to the treasury to retrieve idols of all the pagan gods they had conquered over the years. They were to be paraded out in a show of Marduk's dominance. However, when the Persians had conquered Jerusalem, they found no idols in the Temple. They didn't find idols of YHWH anywhere. So they took what they could find from the temple; a bunch of goblets, plates, and silverware. It was brought out at the party, and the king decides, 'Let's use it to eat.'

In the middle of the party, Belshazzar looks up and sees a hand writing on the wall. The Bible says the king was so scared this knees knocked together. Then he did what any arrogant, half-drunk king would do. He asked, 'Who can read that? I'll make you the third highest in the land.' Why the third highest? His retired dad is still walking around somewhere. Belshazzar promises a lot of things, but everyone who saw the wall said, 'I have no idea what it says.'

Then the queen approached the king, 'I know a guy who worked for your grandfather.' By now, Daniel is very old, but they found him & brought him to the king. The king offered Daniel all the rewards, but after seeing the writing on the wall, Daniel replied, 'I'm not sure

I want to be third in command of this ship. It's going down. But I'll interpret it for you.'

Daniel realized everyone in the great hall was listening to him at that moment, so he took the opportunity to give the king a little speech. He said, 'Your grandfather was a great leader and feared by all nations. You knew his story, either from your dad or sitting on your grandfather's knee. You knew how God humbled him and he changed the way he ruled. You knew all of that, and yet you have chosen not to rule that way. You rule in arrogance. In fact, you even brought out the goblets from God's Temple and drank from them tonight with incredible disrespect. You were warned. You knew better. So God sent the hand to write a message for you.'



He continued with the interpretation, 'God has your life in his hands, and you failed. So you can understand why I won't accept your gifts. It's over for you. You do not control your own destiny. You may not ever worship God or recognize him, but you're accountable to him, the Most High. He's evaluated you and found you lacking. In other words, it's all temporary. God took it away from your grandfather, and now he's taking it away from you.' (Dan 5:17-28)

While this was all happening, the Persians had diverted the river into a marshy area outside the city. The water level dropped until soldiers could slip under the wall. They opened the city gates to let in the entire army, and they took the city with minimal resistance. That very night King Belshazzar was executed.

So what's the moral of the story? The Most High God is sovereign over all the kingdoms of men. He gives them temporarily to anyone He wishes. All leadership is temporary, and we're accountable to Him. This is true in any area of leadership... business, church, school, non-profit, education, government, for-profit. When we survey all we control and influence, it's easy to forget & become arrogant to some degree. We look at ourselves and appreciate our own accomplishments. All the while, God is thinking, 'You're looking the wrong way. Look to me. You'd realize how small you are. You'd see how little you actually control.' At that point, we'll realize, 'God gave me this position to rule or lead. So I'm accountable to him for how I treat people, the decisions I make, and how I lead.' It's no longer about me. People aren't here for me; rather, I'm here for them. In that moment, we become different leaders.

We need to recognize this simple truth: Leadership is a stewardship. It's temporary. And we're accountable.

Your talent or ability to write, raise funds, manage, improve, speak, administrate... it may make you popular, but it doesn't make you a great leader. You only become a great leader when you recognize the truth that Nebuchadnezzar finally recognized. The Most High is over every nation, business, church, school, organization, team, etc. God choose to whom they should be given.

With all that in mind, if Daniel were to write a letter to the next President (whoever that may be), it might sound like this:



Dear Mr. President,

While it is true that you are accountable to us, the American people, we are not your source of ultimate accountability.

While it is true that you must answer to the Congress of the United States, you must one day answer to someone of far greater consequence.

While you consult with leaders from around the world, our hope is that you will not forget to consult with the Creator of this world.

As the great king, Nebuchadnezzar, was once reminded, "The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes."

So your leadership, like all leadership, is a stewardship. It is temporary. And you are accountable.

Sincerely,
Concerned Citizens of the United States

My prayer is this:

Thank you, God, that we live in a nation where we have the opportunity that so many in the world will never have. We get to choose our next leader. Thank you for the freedoms we enjoy and for the men and women who have paid a high price for it. I hope we never take it lightly. I pray we will be good stewards as citizens to influence the direction of our nation. I pray for the next President, whoever that ends up being. I pray he'll realize the Most High gave him the opportunity to lead our nation. I pray he will wake up every day understanding that his leadership is temporary, and that he's accountable to You... not to us. I pray You will give him the courage and conviction that surpasses any political party, agenda, or pressure from the outside. I pray that he'll lead as if were accountable to You, and that he will be a good steward of what is given to him. I pray this in the precious name of Jesus, Amen.



STORM CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

By David Krogh

(This article is based on a sermon delivered at the Pleasant Hill, Ohio Church of God on September 23, 2012 and Cornerstone Bible Church on October 14, 2012).

This morning I want to speak to you from Matthew 24:1-14 as it relates to what is happening in the world today. I hope you will leave here today with a greater awareness of current events as they relate to Bible prophecy and that you will prepare for the end of the age and the return of Christ.

As we gather here this morning, the United States and the world are at a critical time in history. There are major storm clouds gathering on the horizon. Let me mention 6 of them for you:

1. World Food Crisis - crippling drought and bizarre weather patterns have damaged food production all over the world this summer, and the UN and the World Bank have both issued ominous warnings about the food inflation that is coming.

The US has experienced the worst drought in more than 50 years this summer, and some experts are already declaring that the weather has been so dry for so long that tremendous damage has already been done to next year's crops.

Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan have all seen their wheat crops devastated by the horrible drought this summer.

Does it concern you that Federal renewable-fuel standards require the blending of 13.2 billion gallons of corn ethanol with gasoline this year? This will require 4.7 billion bushels of corn, 40 percent of this year's crop! We will have to decide whether to eat or drive our cars! This will not be a hard decision to make, but if we decide to eat, how are we going to get to work or get to the grocery store to buy our food? What will happen to commerce and the economy?



2. Iran - An apocalyptic, genocidal death cult is in power in Iran. The mullahs in Tehran believe we are living in the end of days and that the way to hasten the coming of their so-called Islamic messiah known as the Twelfth Imam is to annihilate Judeo-Christian civilization as we know it. It is prepared to unveil a domestically produced cruise missile capable of being launched from land, sea, and air that can reach major Israeli cities, including Jerusalem.

Why is that a problem? Because Iran has vowed to wipe Israel off the map! This missile capability has happened on top of Iran's continuing efforts to produce a nuclear bomb. Though economic sanctions have been placed on Iran, this has not deterred or even slowed down her work on the bomb. She has vowed that her goal is the total annihilation of Israel.

Israel is carefully weighing her options in regard to attacking Iran first to destroy her bomb making factories and facilities. Just a couple of weeks ago, the US and Israel were conducting a war of words over this matter. Israel has asked the US to set some deadlines or draw a firm red line requiring Iran to stop its bomb making. If she refuses, then Israel wants the US to act. But our government said we will not set any deadlines or draw any red lines.

The US has strongly demanded that Israel not make a pre-emptive strike on Iran, but Israel maintains that her very survival is at stake and if something isn't done, Iran will finish making nuclear bombs and Israel will be destroyed.

Some experts believe that Israel may strike Iran before the US Presidential election on Nov. 6. As I was preparing this message several weeks ago, I wondered if Israel would have already acted before I delivered this message. Please be watching carefully in the next several weeks to see what happens. "We are entering the most fateful 50 days since Yom Kippur War, says a Senior Israeli Official. (referring to a war which took place in 1973) 40 years ago.

I really appreciate a statement made by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu: "If the Arabs put down their weapons today, there would be no more violence. If the Jews put down their weapons today, there would be no more Israel."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to the US to speak at the United Nations two weeks ago. He requested a meeting with President Obama and was told that the President was too busy to meet with him. In his UN speech he brought a visual aid and though the US has refused to draw a red line, he drew one on a bomb. He says that Iran must not be permitted to proceed beyond this red line.



Are you aware that several weeks ago, for 12 days, battleships, aircraft carriers, minesweepers and submarines from 25 nations converged on the Strait of Hormuz for a military exercise. Iran has threatened to close the strait of Hormuz if they are attacked by Israel or the United States. 35% of the world's oil flows through that narrow strait. If Iran were to close the strait, the world economy would be brought to its knees.

The US has 3 aircraft carriers in these war games and each one of them has more aircraft than the Iran military has, so the US could clearly gain air superiority.

At the same time, British and French war ships are conducting a naval exercise in the eastern Mediterranean off the coast of Israel. These ships could be sent to the Gulf region through the Suez Canal if it becomes necessary.

3. China - I read a report that says that China has tested the launch of its first intercontinental ballistic missile and a submarine-launched ballistic missile. These tests appear designed to give China a first strike nuclear capability against the United States, raising the question of what exactly, China is planning. China has said that if Iran is attacked, she will defend Iran.

In Rev. 9:16 it speaks about the king of the East marching with 200 million soldiers to the Middle East in the end times. This would appear to be China, because with its population of over 1.2 billion people it is the only nation on earth that has the ability to raise an army of 200 million soldiers!



China is a growing world power. And she is the largest foreign holder of United States debt - \$1.2 trillion. US citizens don't own this much debt. Americans own "only" \$959 billion of the debt. This cartoon illustrates how big the debt is.

And this leads us to the next storm cloud:

4. US Debt - I am sure that many of you know that our country is headed for what has been called a "fiscal cliff." This cliff is a mix of nearly \$500 billion in tax hikes and spending cuts set to go into effect in January. It was initially thought that flying off this cliff would cause a "modest recession" in the first half of 2013, but the closer we come to it, most economists are convinced that the consequences will be significantly worse.



According to a new analysis by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the country will be plunged into a severe recession if Congress fails to act on the fiscal cliff.

According to a report in the Washington Post, the massive round of New Year's belt-tightening ... "would disrupt recent economic progress, push the unemployment rate back up to 9.1 percent by the end of 2013 and cause economic conditions that will probably be considered a recession."

I am sure you have seen the numbers on our budget - our federal government has been spending more than a trillion dollars per year more than it is taking in. That amounts to

\$41,210 every second more than it takes in!!! This is \$2.5 million per minute and during this message that is \$74 million more our government will borrow!

Our national debt just passed \$16 trillion dollars!

Efforts to increase taxes and reduce spending have gone nowhere. In an issue of Kent Rosses' Thrive e-mail, he had an item about the US debt as it compares to a household budget.

United States Budget - 2010-2011

* U.S. Tax revenue:	\$ 2,170,000,000,000
* Fed budget:	\$ 3,820,000,000,000
* New debt:	\$ 1,650,000,000,000
* National debt:	\$14,271,000,000,000
* Recent budget cuts:	\$ 38,500,000,000

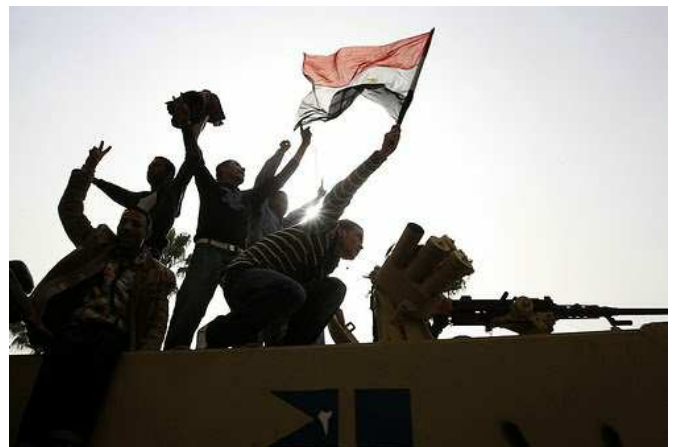
Let's now remove 8 zeros and pretend it's a household budget:

* Annual family income:	\$ 21,700
* Money the family spent:	\$ 38,200
* New debt on the credit card:	\$ 16,500
* Outstanding balance on the credit card:	\$ 142,710
* Total budget cuts:	\$ 385

These numbers are staggering!

5. European Debt Crisis - several countries have staggering debt - Greece, Spain, Italy, Ireland. There has been a lot of rioting when the governments have tried to cut back spending. Banks are in trouble since they have loaned money to these countries. Germany is the only strong economy and they are getting tired of bailing out the other governments and banks. This threatens the collapse of the Euro. And this hurts the US because historically Europe has imported a lot of goods from us.

6. Turmoil around the world - The Arab spring saw the overthrow of governments in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia; a civil war is now raging in Syria; our embassies were attacked recently in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, and Tunisia and our ambassador to Libya was killed; rioting in Spain over the austerity measures that the government is taking.



Does the text in Matthew 24 relate to any of this?

v. 6 - wars and rumors of wars - Yes

v. 7 - nation rising against nation - Yes - north and south Korea; China and Japan; Iran against Israel; cyber warfare.

famines - Yes

earthquakes - Yes more since 2004, but is this a trend or just a blip?

v. 9 - persecution - Yes

v. 12 - increase in wickedness; love of many grow cold - Yes

v. 13 - Important words - he who stands firm to the end will be saved?



Are Christians standing firm? There has been a dramatic decline in membership of mainline churches - From 1960 to 1988, mainline church membership declined from 31 million to 25 million, then fell to 21 million in 2005. While in 1970 the mainline churches claimed most Protestants and more than 30 percent of the population as members, today they are a minority among American Protestants, claiming approximately 15 percent of American adults among their adherents in 2009.

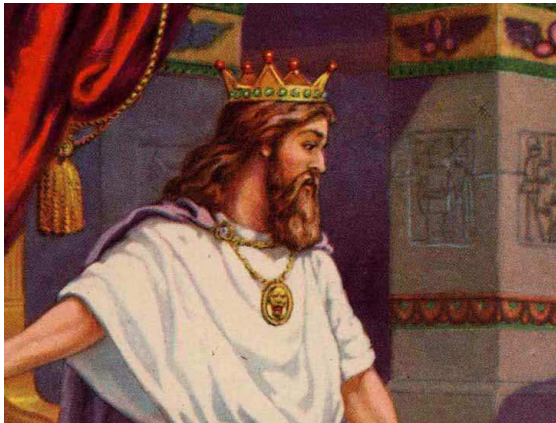
The Southern Baptist Convention, the second largest denomination, has reported a decline in membership for the fourth year in a row.

What about church attendance? Pollsters indicate that about 40% of the population say that they attend church regularly. But

when churches are asked to report their attendance numbers, the results say that only about 20% of the population is regular in attendance. Why the difference?

Researchers have said that what is at play is what is known as "the halo effect"—the difference between what people tell pollsters and what people actually do. Americans tend to over-report so-

cially desirable behavior like voting and attending church and under-reporting socially undesirable behavior like drinking.



v. 14 - gospel of kingdom preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations. Is it being preached? What is the church supposed to do at the end of the age?
Our Church Situation

What can we do to prepare for the end? In 1 Chronicles 12:32 it says that in King David's court were "men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do." Do we have any men or women like this in the church today who understand the times in which we live and know what the church should do?

How can our church help fulfill Matt. 24:14?

1. We need a strong preaching and teaching ministry in our church. We need to make sure people know what the Bible says about the end times and God's plan for the future. I teach a couple of Evangelism classes at ABC. And research shows that the best possible evangelism technique is one on one - building relationships with those who are not believers; sharing your testimony; having a Bible study; sharing with them what you believe.
2. Welcome visitors when they come to our church. If people show enough initiative to visit our church, we need to make sure they know they are welcomed and loved.
3. We need to invite people to come to church. In my Evangelism class I use a textbook that was based on a survey of unchurched people. It found that only 5% of unchurched people are hostile to the church. 17% indicated they were very likely to go to church if invited, and 45% indicated that they are somewhat likely to go to church if someone asked them. Another 30% said they probably wouldn't go to church, but they are not hostile. 2/3 are open to coming! We need to ask them!

Church of God General Conference and Atlanta Bible College

What can we do together to fulfill Matthew 24:14?

The vision of our organization articulated by Dr. Joe Martin is: "To join God, knowing, loving, growing, going, serving, teaching, and preparing for His Kingdom through His Son and His Spirit both our generation and the next."

Our mission is: "to serve churches and individuals in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ and God's Kingdom."

The Church of God General Conference is an association of churches that have chosen to work together to advance the cause of the Kingdom. We are glad that this church is a part of this association. We appreciate your prayer and financial support.

There are several ways our organization is serving and trying to make sure the Gospel of the Kingdom is being presented:



1. Training of workers through ABC -

ABC provides instruction for those who want to be full time pastors, youth workers, and missionaries; and we also provide instruction for those who want to be more active laypersons in their church. We offer instruction for those who want to increase their knowledge of the Bible. Students may take classes on campus or by DL ABC has two campuses - one on the south side of Atlanta and one northeast of Atlanta. Our northeast campus serves our Korean extension. Our south campus serves people from our churches as well as many community students. Jesus said in Matt. 9:37 "the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." That is still true today. We need more students at ABC to prepare for the fields that are ready for harvest!



2. Service to our churches - through our Ministry Services Network we provide assistance in helping our churches to be healthy (Natural Church Development); we provide financial aid to churches; we provide church planting assistance; assistance to church treasurers; we sponsor the annual Christian Workers Seminar and the summer FUEL for youth.

3. Service to pastors - we have a retirement program; we provide assistance with income tax preparation ; placement assistance for pastors looking for a church.

4. Ministry to the world

Through the work of the Lord's Harvest International, we oversee work in Korea - 3 churches as well as 5 in the US; 10 churches in Pakistan; 125 churches in Malawi; 250 in Mozambique; 5 in Tanzania; 20 in Haiti; and work in Peru , Mexico, Uruguay, and the Philippine Islands.

The message of the Kingdom is also getting out through the Internet:

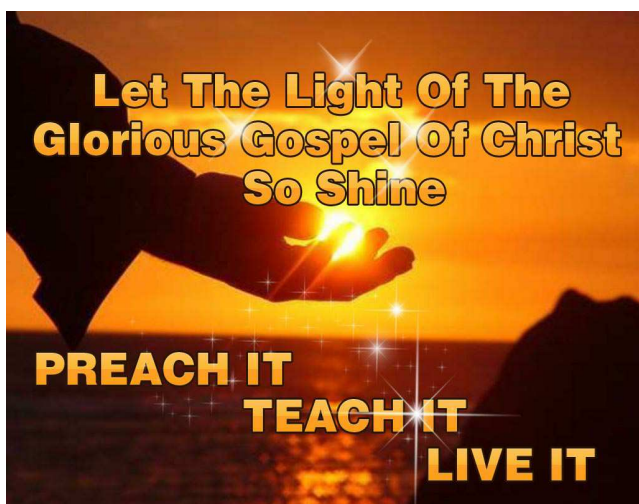
Dan Gill - www.21stcr.org has 600,000 per month - 20,000 hits per day!

Wally Winner - Cogcast.org has 500 listeners each day!

Anthony Buzzard - forcusontheKingdom.org has 17,000 hits per month - 600 per day!

ABC/General Conference Website - atlantabiblecollege.com - has been contacted by 82 countries in the past several months!

The online Systematic Bible Study Course is being studied by people around the world!
YES - Matt. 24:14 IS BEING FULFILLED!



Conclusion:

The bottom line is that:

1. We must stand firm in our faith until the end
2. We must be faithful to proclaim the message.- Warning people and taking advantage of every opportunity to prepare people for the return of Christ.
3. We must not worry about the storm clouds that are coming. Psalm 46:1, 2 says: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear!"

We live in exciting and frightening times. But what is happening are signs that point us to the soon return of Christ. Please be ready and watching for his coming!



Delbert D. Rankin
Ladora, IA

Russell J. Rankin
St. Cloud, MN

Darrell E. Rankin
Erie, CO

Arlen F. Rankin
Wenatchee, WA

J. Ronald Rankin
Cashmere, WA

The Fourth Annual Wenatchee Prophecy Conference

This Conference of brethren and interested persons was held in Central Washington the last weekend of September 2012. It was unique in presentation, biblical in focus and content, and instructional, inspirational & edifying in nature for the seventy-plus in attendance. God's presence was evident throughout. The charitable spirit of inquiry and goodness of fellowship was enjoyed by all. The glory of God was our aim.

The five speakers are brothers in the flesh and brothers in the faith. They are the sons of the late Forrest & Evelyn Rankin by birth; Sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Together they represented 230 years of Bible teaching and varied ministries across the United States and in foreign lands.

The Biblical theme was "The Message of Daniel the Prophet" in the following presentations and discussions.

Friday, the 28th: 1) "The Gospel According to Daniel the Prophet" Arlen; 2) "The Golden Head & the Winged Lion" Ron; 3) God Working in the Nations: Medo-Persia & the Setting Up of Kings" Delbert; 4) "Prophecies Common to Daniel & Contemporary Prophets" Russell.

Saturday, the 29th: 5) "The Brass, the Goat & the Winged Leopard" Russell; 6) "The Fourth World Empire of Daniel" Ron; 7) "Daniel, Resurrection & Eternal Life" Darrell; 8) A Panel Discussion by the Five Speakers.

Sunday, the 30th: "Watching Means Knowing Where to Look" Arlen.

To the enabling God of grace and hope we give our praise. To the saving and ever-present Messiah we give exaltation. To our co-laborers we give our thanks.



CHILDREN MURDERERS: DOING WHAT THEY HAD BEEN TAUGHT

By Wally Winner

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6
"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against [their] parents, and cause them to be put to death." Matthew 10:21

This seems like something difficult to imagine, that family would turn against each other, and children would harm their parents. Can you imagine children with no conscience about or being deceived into taking the lives of others?

Thankfully, for the most part, this does not happen and we still have some shock when it does occur. However, today, this has taken on a more sinister development.

Early in September, a 14-year-old boy rode his bike up to the NATO headquarters in Kabul. The explosives wrapped around the boy's chest then detonated, killing himself and six other people, including children. Across the world later in September, a 14-year-old girl choked her newborn baby to death and hid the body in her room. It is easy to be horrified when mere kids willingly commit murder, and yet, the cultures of these two teens prepared them to treat human life as something okay (or even good) to destroy.

A Boy:

The boy who rode his bike up to the NATO headquarters was just that – a boy. He could be considered an especially brave young man, one dedicated to his cause, filled with faith that his act of sacrifice would benefit his family and tribe and would give him assurance of heaven. He went out to fight the infidels, the enemies of Allah. He obeyed those who sent him. If only he had been raised in a different culture. Poor, foolish kid.

Did he pedal with focused determination or with terror? Did he even stop to think about the lives of the children selling this and that in front of the NATO building? Did the children catch his eye for a moment, causing him to hesitate? He was 14, not 24, not 54.

This solitary boy was used by a group that does not value human life. He was taken advantage of at an age when boys want more than



anything to impress others, to prove they can be men, tough, strong and brave. Yet, the result was that he killed himself and others in a vicious act that left bits of flesh raining over the sidewalk.

He did what he'd been taught to do.

A Girl:

The Florida girl, on the other hand, was not weighed down by a vest packed with explosives and sent out by her elders. She was a pregnant girl who didn't want to mess things up with her mother and so hid her pregnancy and killed her newborn. She was physically mature, old enough to have sex and conceive a child. At the same time, she was so young that she didn't even try to dispose of the baby's body. She just hid it, like any kid hides something that could get them into trouble.

A 14-year-old is quite old enough to understand that murder is wrong, that babies should be cared for and protected. At the same time, 14-year-olds are not known for being tremendously skilled at appreciating the full consequences of their actions. They are known for being emotional and making decisions based on feelings. Remember Romeo and Juliet. It's certain the girl knew that what she was doing was wrong, but she did it anyway, and confessed openly to the police when questioned about it. At the same time, was she truly doing anything contrary to what she had been taught?



Babies are valued in American culture. They are adored and dressed in cute clothes and parties are thrown for them. Wanted babies, anyway. The unwanted ones, however... those are considered disposable by law.

This 14-year-old girl's case underlines the moral schizophrenia of our society. Had she gone to a clinic and received an abortion three months prior to the birth, she would not be facing charges of murder. Not only would she have been considered in her rights to get an abortion, many Americans would have thought her mother crazy to have her keep the baby.

So, what is this girl really guilty of? Is she guilty because she waited too long to deal with her problem? She didn't trust her parents? She didn't seek help from anybody?

No, she's guilty of murdering her baby! She simply did it after the baby was already born, losing the sanctioning of the law. It is a tragic commentary on her life and our society that a 14-year-old kid didn't think that murder was as bad as telling her mother she was pregnant.

Human beings are born in sin. We know right and wrong innately, and yet we are capable of every evil under the sun. At the same time, our thought processes are formed by the world and people around us. By the time these two young people turned 14, they should have appreciated the evil of murder and the value of human life. They should have been tender enough to vomit at the idea of killing another person, especially children younger than themselves. Yet, both have been raised in cultures that say that human

life is disposable if necessity demands it. Both behaved according to what they had been taught was justified behavior.

You may teach your children at home what is righteous, but they can unlearn everything at school.

Godless teachers and administrators, inappropriate teachings, and rebellious children will convince children that the parents are wrong, and they are right.

They have convinced themselves that they are better authorities than the parents are when it comes to child rearing.

They are also prepared to look for “abusive parents” who by their standards, discipline their children in any way.

They encourage children to report any form of discipline.

There is real abuse, which should be reported.

But, rational, and appropriate, discipline is not abuse.

But, they will use any form of discipline as a criteria to contact Child Protective Services, and remove parental rights, and take control of the children.

There are good teachers and bad ones, so this depends on the moral values of the teacher.

The majority opinions out number, and out vote, the parents on any issue.

Law officers and other officials have been known to misadvise children. One officer was advising underage runaways that they could legally leave home at 16 years old. So, instead of supporting the anguished parent, who was looking for the child, he was aiding the rebellious behavior.

The values of society are not necessarily moral.

Children will go with the majority opinion, and peer pressure.

Children will sacrifice their parents, if they are convinced that the parents are wrong, and hindering their “rights” and “freedom.”

If parents are rebellious, abusive, and lawless themselves, they should not expect anything different from their children.

They cannot have a double standard: One for themselves, and one for the children.

Parents have to set a good example, and be right with God, before they can hope for anything positive for their children.



While we have so far been unable to control the Taliban and their powerful influence over the Afghan people, we do have responsibility over our own lives.

We are in charge of our families,

our children and the patches of perspective that we ourselves add to the fabric of our culture. We need to make sure that in all things, we bring the life of the Spirit of God with us wherever we go, and by God’s presence shine godly wisdom into dark situations. We need to each be a bright shining light that offers scared 14-year-olds other options available to them than the destruction that comes so naturally to us all.

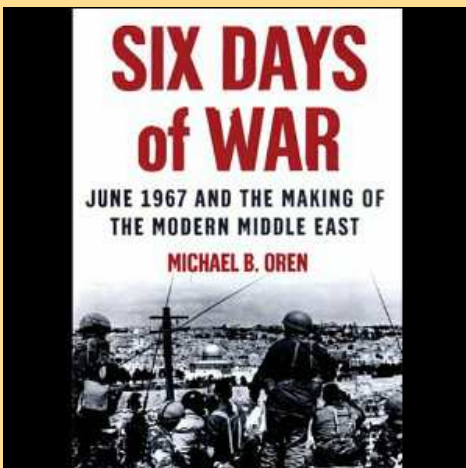
(Written in the October 1967 Progress Journal,
just a few months after the 1967 Middle East War)

Now Is the Time

By Harold Doan



All the world watched "with awe as the nation of Israel, regathered from many lands and established as a sovereign nation. Only twenty years ago, carried out a lightning six-day war and for the third time in twenty years overwhelmed its attackers. In June, 1967, Israel's outnumbered armies swept out of their besieged borders and swiftly captured the Sinai Desert to the Suez Canal, Jordanian lands west of the Jordan, including Old Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the hills overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Israel seems determined to keep these new lands, with their shortened and **more** easily defensible borders.



The events which have electrified the world in these past few months are of great prophetic significance. The fast-paced movements of nations and the diplomatic struggle that has followed were foreseen by the Bible. They are indications that we are nearing the conclusion of this age, and may soon see the return of Jesus Christ to this earth and the establishment here of the eternal Kingdom of God.

The regathered nation of Israel is in itself one of the outstanding signs that this age nears its end. "The miracle of Israel" is a favorite phrase of writers who have visited this amazing state. Called back to its homeland in keeping with ancient prophecies, revived Israel is a sign of Jesus' soon coming. Fulfilling prophecies of Ezekiel 36 and 37, Israel is being regathered to await its Messiah.



The enmity of Israel's neighbors was predicted in Psalm 83, which anticipated that they would take "crafty counsel against thy people." and say, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that

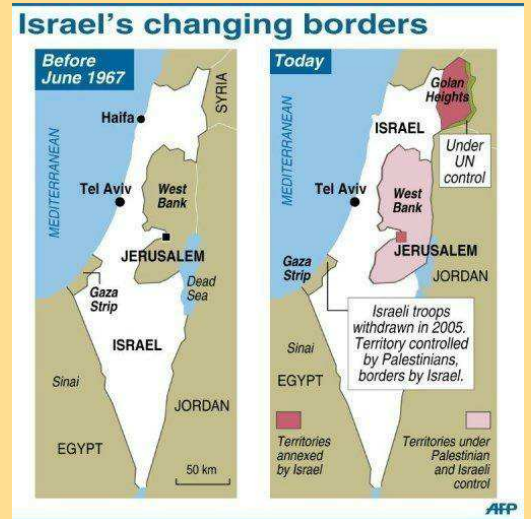


the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." As a result of this enmity and their ill-advised adventures against Israel, the words of Ezekiel are being fulfilled: " Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame."

The desire of Russia to gain control over Israel has been brought to light as a result of the defeat of Russia's allies. In the diplomatic fencing which has resulted, it has become apparent to all the world that Russia covets the land of Israel and entertains an inbred hatred against her people. True to the ancient prediction of Ezekiel 38 and 39, Russia stands ready for a personal confrontation with Israel in the struggle that will end this age with the direct intervention of the Lord.

Of most significance, is the fact that now, after more than two thousand years under Gentile domination, Jerusalem is again an Israeli city. Controlled by one Gentile power after another since the days of Babylon (606 B.C.), Jerusalem was set free and claimed by Israel in June, 1967. One recalls the prophecy of Jesus: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. . . . Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things *begin to come to pass*, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your- redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:24-28).

In these awesome yet perilous times, we encourage you to look up. Look up to Jesus. Accept him as your Saviour. Live faithfully in his service. Watch and pray for his coming again. Now is the time to set your house in order, for the day of the Lord draws near.



LITTLE BLESSINGS FROM HEAVEN

By Peggy Winner

The LORD showers us with blessings; they are everywhere waiting to be found,
But first we must be ready to receive these blessings, and be willing to look for them all around.

We must be willing to take the time to notice, the 'little blessings' in life that we are given,
God gives them as a reminder to us, that these blessings are His gifts from heaven.

Perhaps it's the blessing of hearing children's laughter, or watching them play and having fun,
Or maybe it's the blessing of a beautiful sunrise, as a night ends and a new day has begun.

Perhaps it's a blessing of a dandelion bouquet, that was picked and given to us with a smile,
Or maybe it's the blessing of a letter or a visit, from a friend we haven't seen in a long while.

Perhaps it's a blessing of a hug from a friend or hearing the words "I love you" spoken by
someone special you love.

These things are more than gestures; they are blessings from God above.

We may feel joy when thinking about plans for our future, and feel sadness as we reminisce
about events in our past,

But the 'today' moments we have in our life should be cherished, creating special memories in
our life that will last.

There may be some days that seemed to be only filled with toil and trouble, yet we must
remember God and be thankful He is there,

Our Heavenly Father is not only the God of the happy times, but is the God who uplifts us when
in despair.

Never take the life you have been given for granted, try to make the most of each day,
Always Thank God for the 'Little Blessings' he sends you from Heaven; always remember to
give Him praise.

PROVERBS 10: 22a

"It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it".

PROVERBS 28: 20a

"A faithful man will abound with blessings."

COME YE THANKFUL PEOPLE

BY REX CAIN

Another year has rolled around and we've come to another Thanksgiving season.

Thanksgiving usually causes Christian Americans, who have been brought up on the traditional heritage of our nation, to think back to the Pilgrims and that first good Thanksgiving with the friendly Indians. For very modern Americans, they think of turkey, football and going to visit the relatives – not to mention a paid day or two off from work.

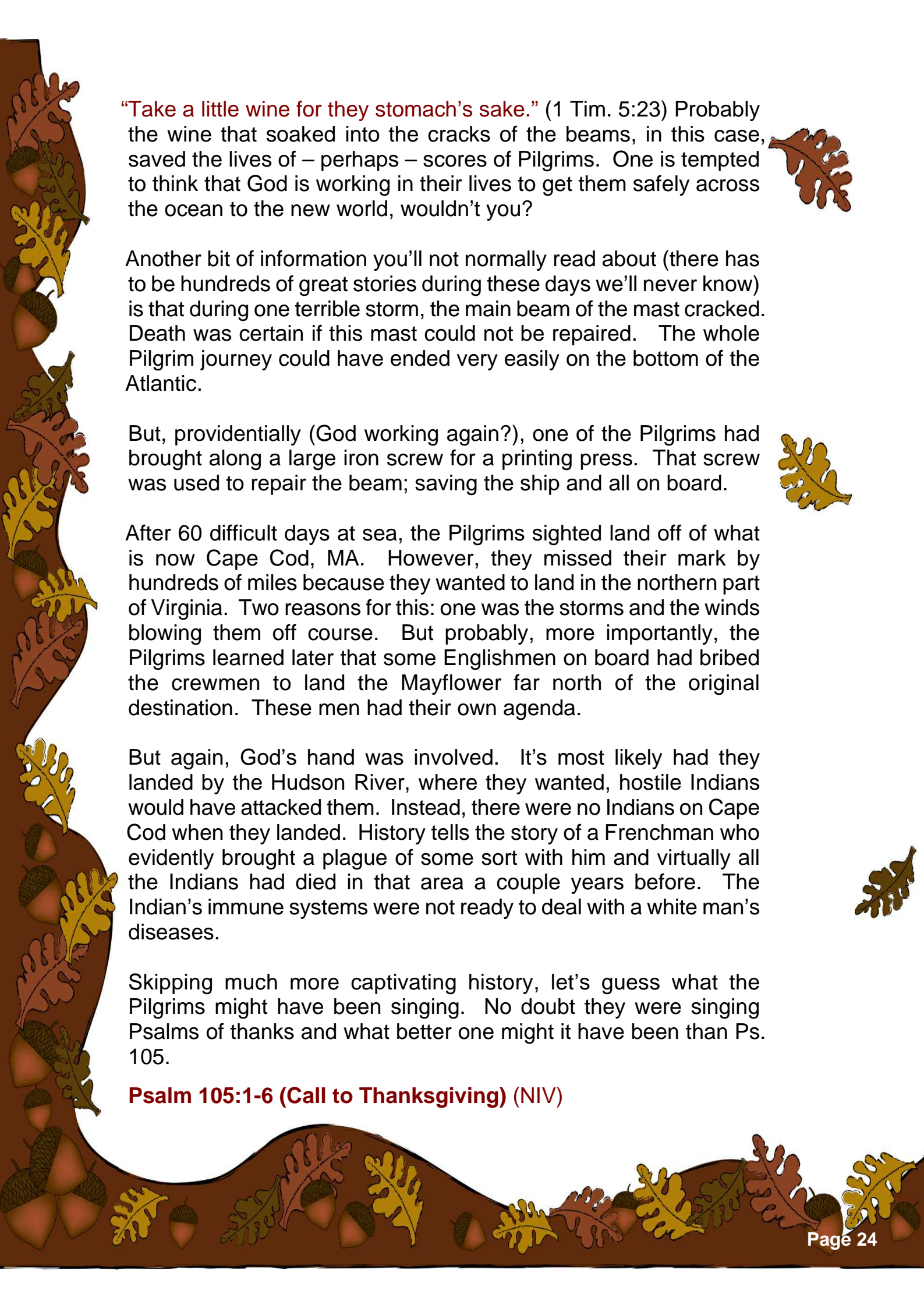
But letting our minds roll back almost 400 years, we discover that the crossing of the Atlantic in the fall of 1620 had been an extremely difficult trip. For two months, 102 people were wedged into what was called the 'tween decks' ... what is actually the cargo space of the boat. It was only 5 and ½ feet high. No one was allowed above deck because of the terrible storms. This was no pleasure cruise, yet only one person died during the voyage.

The pilgrims had comforted themselves by singing the Psalms but this "noise" irritated one of the ship's paid crewmembers. I guess Christians weren't always liked even 400 years ago. But, that's sarcasm since we know Christians haven't been liked nor tolerated very well since they were called Christians. Those who saw him perform miracles crucified even the Founder of our religion. So what should we expect? Certainly not any better treatment.

Anyway, this crewmember told the Pilgrims he would find great delight in throwing their corpses overboard after they had fallen victim to the illnesses that were routine on such trips across the ocean in those days. But, as you might guess, this crewmember was the only one that became sick and died.

A little known fact about the Mayflower is that this ship normally carried wine, and wine spillage from previous voyages had soaked the beams, acting as a disinfectant to prevent the spread of disease. I guess this adds new meaning to Paul's suggestion to Timothy to





“Take a little wine for they stomach’s sake.” (1 Tim. 5:23) Probably the wine that soaked into the cracks of the beams, in this case, saved the lives of – perhaps – scores of Pilgrims. One is tempted to think that God is working in their lives to get them safely across the ocean to the new world, wouldn’t you?

Another bit of information you’ll not normally read about (there has to be hundreds of great stories during these days we’ll never know) is that during one terrible storm, the main beam of the mast cracked. Death was certain if this mast could not be repaired. The whole Pilgrim journey could have ended very easily on the bottom of the Atlantic.

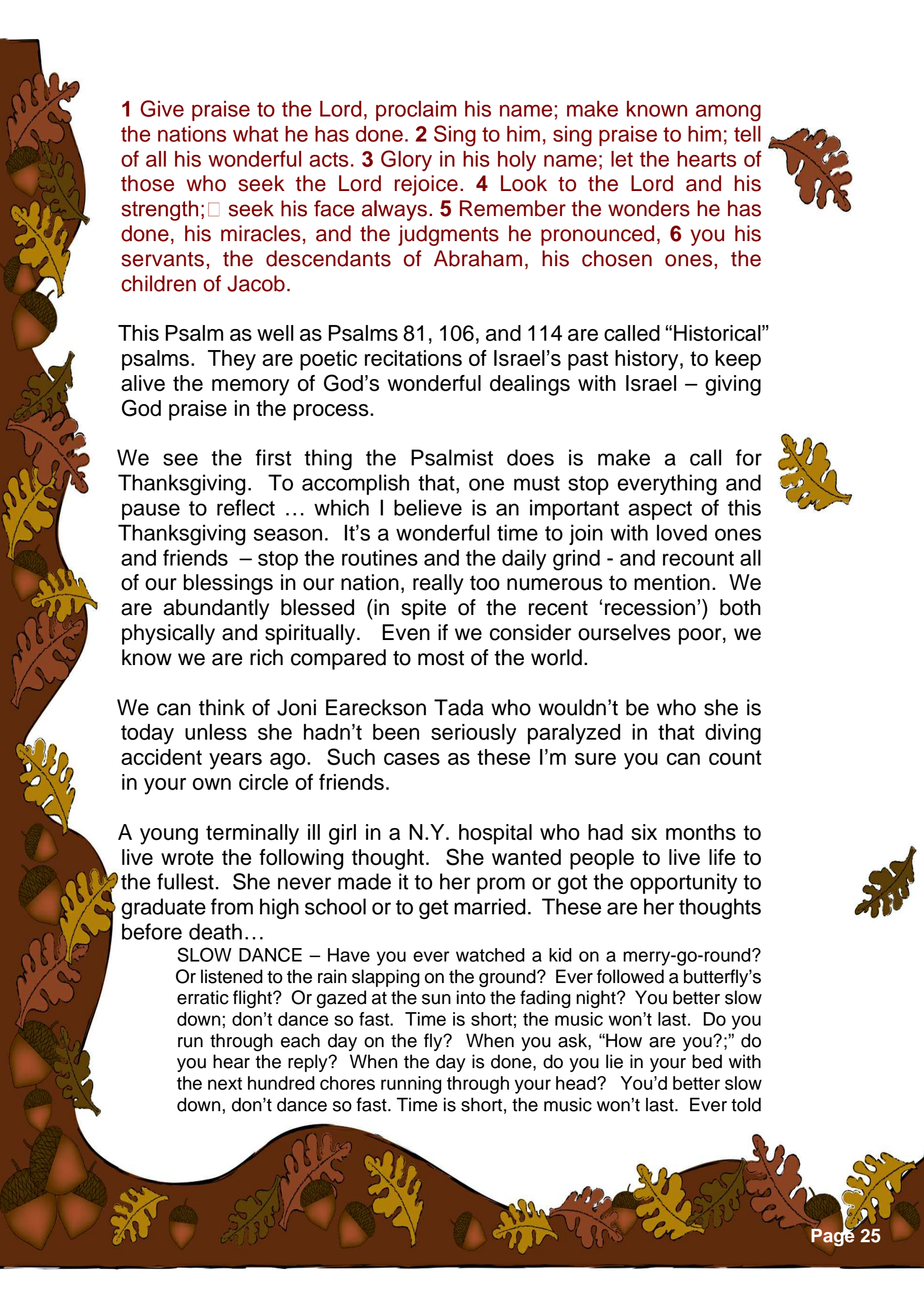
But, providentially (God working again?), one of the Pilgrims had brought along a large iron screw for a printing press. That screw was used to repair the beam; saving the ship and all on board.

After 60 difficult days at sea, the Pilgrims sighted land off of what is now Cape Cod, MA. However, they missed their mark by hundreds of miles because they wanted to land in the northern part of Virginia. Two reasons for this: one was the storms and the winds blowing them off course. But probably, more importantly, the Pilgrims learned later that some Englishmen on board had bribed the crewmen to land the Mayflower far north of the original destination. These men had their own agenda.

But again, God’s hand was involved. It’s most likely had they landed by the Hudson River, where they wanted, hostile Indians would have attacked them. Instead, there were no Indians on Cape Cod when they landed. History tells the story of a Frenchman who evidently brought a plague of some sort with him and virtually all the Indians had died in that area a couple years before. The Indian’s immune systems were not ready to deal with a white man’s diseases.

Skipping much more captivating history, let’s guess what the Pilgrims might have been singing. No doubt they were singing Psalms of thanks and what better one might it have been than Ps. 105.

Psalm 105:1-6 (Call to Thanksgiving) (NIV)



1 Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. **2** Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. **3** Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. **4** Look to the Lord and his strength; □ seek his face always. **5** Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced, **6** you his servants, the descendants of Abraham, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

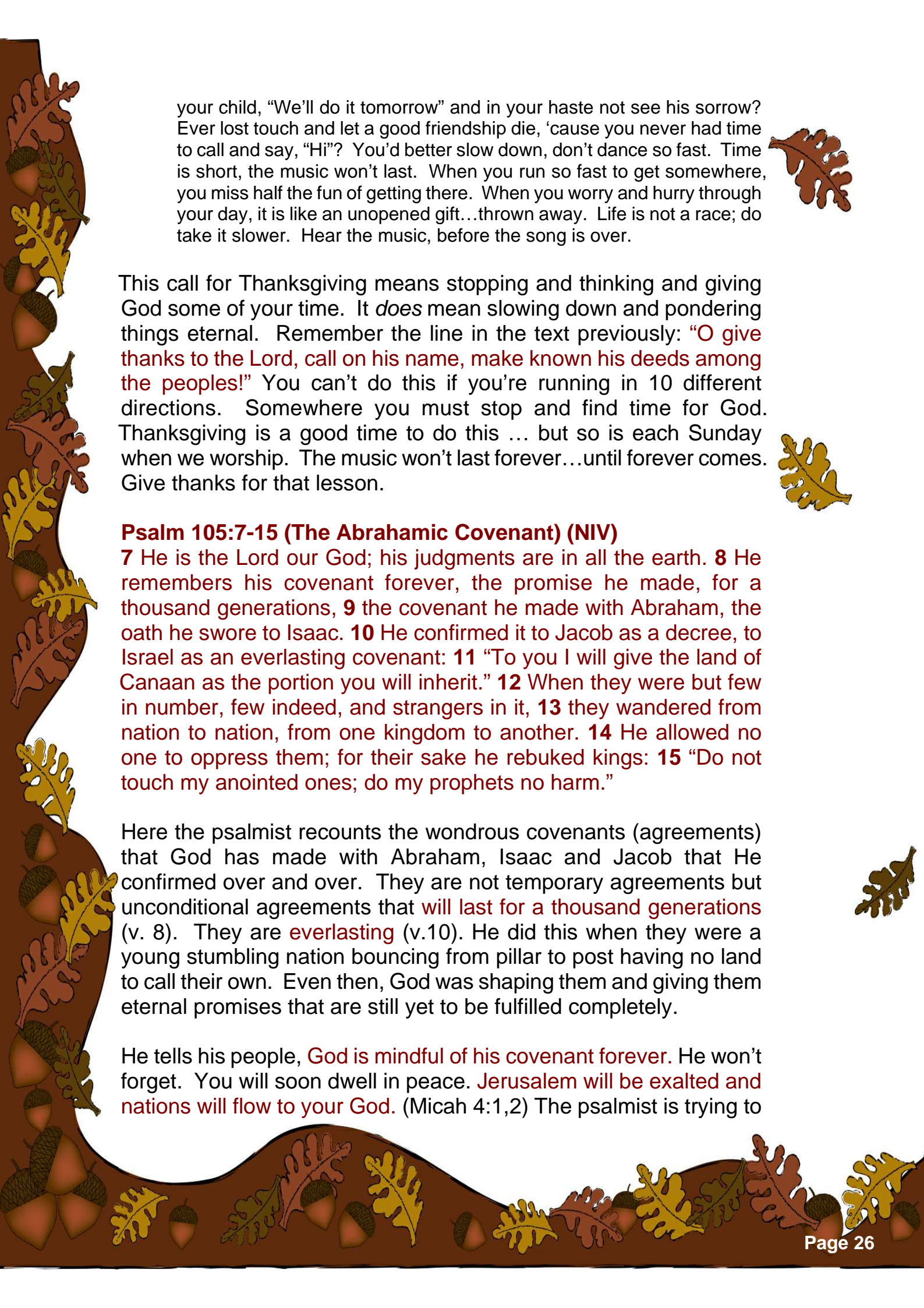
This Psalm as well as Psalms 81, 106, and 114 are called “Historical” psalms. They are poetic recitations of Israel’s past history, to keep alive the memory of God’s wonderful dealings with Israel – giving God praise in the process.

We see the first thing the Psalmist does is make a call for Thanksgiving. To accomplish that, one must stop everything and pause to reflect ... which I believe is an important aspect of this Thanksgiving season. It’s a wonderful time to join with loved ones and friends – stop the routines and the daily grind - and recount all of our blessings in our nation, really too numerous to mention. We are abundantly blessed (in spite of the recent ‘recession’) both physically and spiritually. Even if we consider ourselves poor, we know we are rich compared to most of the world.

We can think of Joni Eareckson Tada who wouldn’t be who she is today unless she hadn’t been seriously paralyzed in that diving accident years ago. Such cases as these I’m sure you can count in your own circle of friends.

A young terminally ill girl in a N.Y. hospital who had six months to live wrote the following thought. She wanted people to live life to the fullest. She never made it to her prom or got the opportunity to graduate from high school or to get married. These are her thoughts before death...

SLOW DANCE – Have you ever watched a kid on a merry-go-round? Or listened to the rain slapping on the ground? Ever followed a butterfly’s erratic flight? Or gazed at the sun into the fading night? You better slow down; don’t dance so fast. Time is short; the music won’t last. Do you run through each day on the fly? When you ask, “How are you?;” do you hear the reply? When the day is done, do you lie in your bed with the next hundred chores running through your head? You’d better slow down, don’t dance so fast. Time is short, the music won’t last. Ever told



your child, “We’ll do it tomorrow” and in your haste not see his sorrow? Ever lost touch and let a good friendship die, ‘cause you never had time to call and say, “Hi”? You’d better slow down, don’t dance so fast. Time is short, the music won’t last. When you run so fast to get somewhere, you miss half the fun of getting there. When you worry and hurry through your day, it is like an unopened gift...thrown away. Life is not a race; do take it slower. Hear the music, before the song is over.

This call for Thanksgiving means stopping and thinking and giving God some of your time. It *does* mean slowing down and pondering things eternal. Remember the line in the text previously: “**O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples!**” You can’t do this if you’re running in 10 different directions. Somewhere you must stop and find time for God. Thanksgiving is a good time to do this ... but so is each Sunday when we worship. The music won’t last forever...until forever comes. Give thanks for that lesson.

Psalm 105:7-15 (The Abrahamic Covenant) (NIV)

7 He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. **8** He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations, **9** the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. **10** He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: **11** “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit.” **12** When they were but few in number, few indeed, and strangers in it, **13** they wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another. **14** He allowed no one to oppress them; for their sake he rebuked kings: **15** “Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm.”

Here the psalmist recounts the wondrous covenants (agreements) that God has made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He confirmed over and over. They are not temporary agreements but unconditional agreements that **will last for a thousand generations** (v. 8). They are **everlasting** (v.10). He did this when they were a young stumbling nation bouncing from pillar to post having no land to call their own. Even then, God was shaping them and giving them eternal promises that are still yet to be fulfilled completely.

He tells his people, **God is mindful of his covenant forever**. He won’t forget. You will soon dwell in peace. **Jerusalem will be exalted and nations will flow to your God.** (Micah 4:1,2) The psalmist is trying to

keep alive the memory. What an item to pause and ponder – God's promises are sure! Forever! Give thanks for that lesson.

Psalm 105:16-22 (God sends Joseph to Egypt) (NIV)

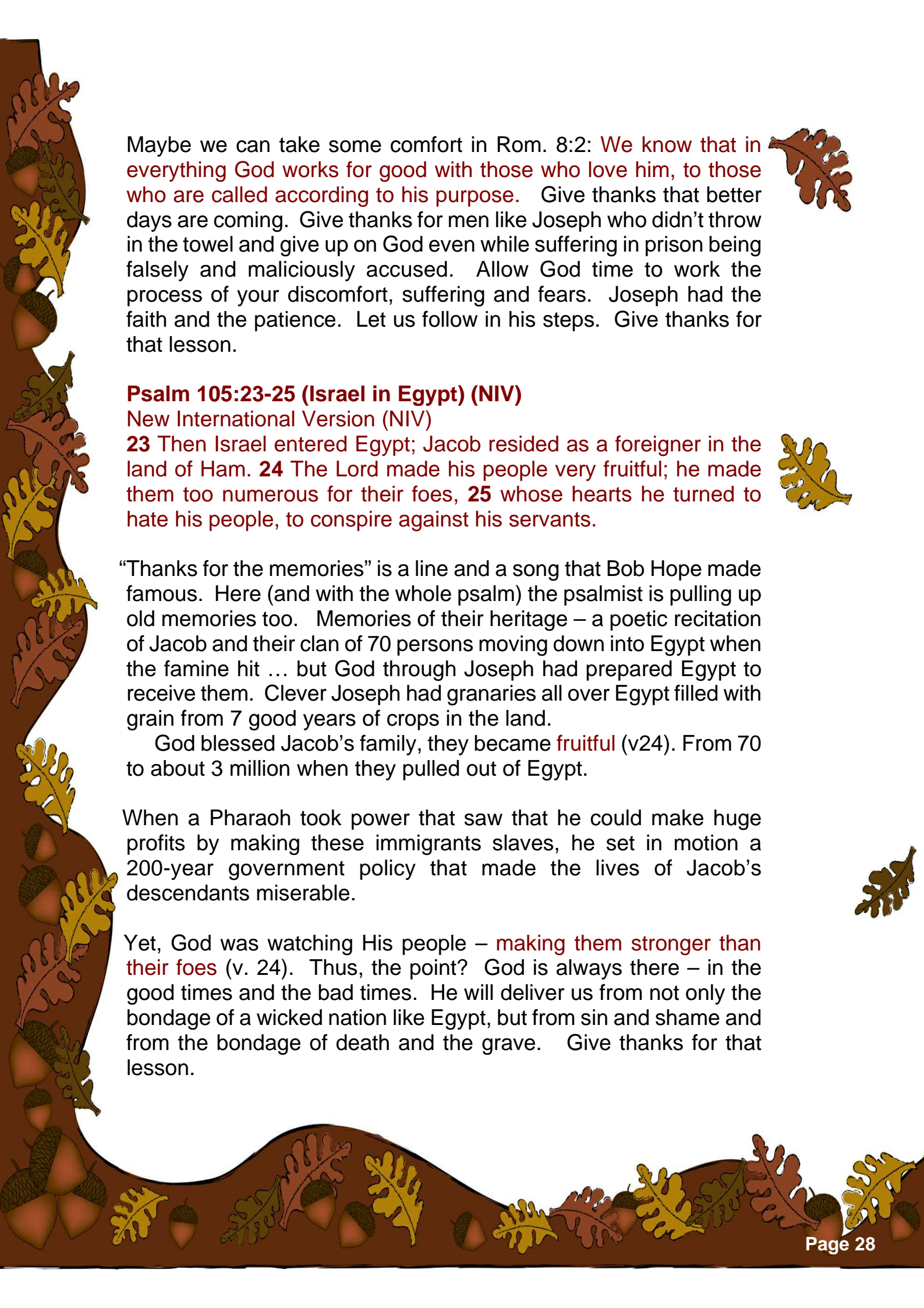
New International Version (NIV)

16 He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food; **17** and he sent a man before them—Joseph, sold as a slave. **18** They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, **19** till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true. **20** The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples set him free. **21** He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, **22** to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom.

The psalmist now calls to their remembrance Joseph and how, while Egypt waited for God's predictions through Joseph's mouth, **God tested him** (v.19). How unfair that was! He hadn't done anything wrong! But most of us have lived long enough to know that being a Christian doesn't mean that we live a charmed life. Sometimes it's very tough. Have you ever heard these words about Joseph in v. 18 – **His feet were hurt with fetters, his neck was put in a collar of iron?**" This pain for Joseph is found nowhere else in Scripture, so it must have been handed down verbally.

Joseph had every reason to moan and groan. He was the runt of the family and was treated like it by his older brothers. He was more than teased about being "Dad's favorite" and endured large amounts of verbal abuse ... that ultimately lead to physical abuse. He was thrown in a pit and only by the grace of God did a caravan of traders come passing by the camp that saved Joseph from being killed by his own brothers. Imagine what Joseph must have been thinking as he rode or walked all the way to Egypt? Fortunately, because of his brains and his devotion to God, he rose to a prominent position in Potiphar's house until one day Potiphar's wife - in her desire for Joseph - turned her desire into rage at his rejection and going to her husband, accused Joseph of rape. This landed him in jail for 13 long years where, as we read here, **His feet were hurt with fetters, his neck was put in a collar of iron.**

As the old country-western tune puts it, do you ever feel that if it wasn't for bad luck you'd have no luck at all?



Maybe we can take some comfort in Rom. 8:2: **We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, to those who are called according to his purpose.** Give thanks that better days are coming. Give thanks for men like Joseph who didn't throw in the towel and give up on God even while suffering in prison being falsely and maliciously accused. Allow God time to work the process of your discomfort, suffering and fears. Joseph had the faith and the patience. Let us follow in his steps. Give thanks for that lesson.

Psalm 105:23-25 (Israel in Egypt) (NIV)

New International Version (NIV)

23 Then Israel entered Egypt; Jacob resided as a foreigner in the land of Ham. **24** The Lord made his people very fruitful; he made them too numerous for their foes, **25** whose hearts he turned to hate his people, to conspire against his servants.

"Thanks for the memories" is a line and a song that Bob Hope made famous. Here (and with the whole psalm) the psalmist is pulling up old memories too. Memories of their heritage – a poetic recitation of Jacob and their clan of 70 persons moving down into Egypt when the famine hit ... but God through Joseph had prepared Egypt to receive them. Clever Joseph had granaries all over Egypt filled with grain from 7 good years of crops in the land.

God blessed Jacob's family, they became **fruitful** (v24). From 70 to about 3 million when they pulled out of Egypt.

When a Pharaoh took power that saw that he could make huge profits by making these immigrants slaves, he set in motion a 200-year government policy that made the lives of Jacob's descendants miserable.

Yet, God was watching His people – **making them stronger than their foes** (v. 24). Thus, the point? God is always there – in the good times and the bad times. He will deliver us from not only the bondage of a wicked nation like Egypt, but from sin and shame and from the bondage of death and the grave. Give thanks for that lesson.




Psalm 105:26-36 (Moses and the plagues) (NIV)

26 He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. **27** They performed his signs among them, his wonders in the land of Ham. **28** He sent darkness and made the land dark—□for had they not rebelled against his words? **29** He turned their waters into blood, causing their fish to die. **30** Their land teemed with frogs, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers. **31** He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. **32** He turned their rain into hail, with lightning throughout their land; **33** he struck down their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their country. **34** He spoke, and the locusts came, grasshoppers without number; **35** they ate up every green thing in their land, ate up the produce of their soil. **36** Then he struck down all the firstborn in their land,□the firstfruits of all their manhood.

In a word, God is the worker of miracles! Some of the miracles waiting in the wings for our eyes (and those saints sleeping in the earth) are: to escape the grave, to be robed with immortality, to see Jesus face-to-face, to see our sleeping loved ones, to set up a righteous and just earthly kingdom, to rule with Christ for a thousand years, to restore the earth to perfection and beauty, to then turn this refreshed earth over to the Almighty God, and finally, to be in the presence of the Creator Himself. Who can imagine such a time? One day, we will do as the Psalmist is doing, giving a recitation of our history and heritage. For, one day, what is now future will be history. These events will have transpired just as surely as Jesus came the first time, atoned for sin, died and rose again and now lives. Gives thanks for that lesson.

Psalm 105:37-42 (The exodus and wanderings) (NIV)

37 He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered. **38** Egypt was glad when they left, because dread of Israel had fallen on them. **39** He spread out a cloud as a covering, and a fire to give light at night. **40** They asked, and he brought them quail; he fed them well with the bread of heaven. **41** He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed like a river in the desert. **42** For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham.



In the desert God provided shade trees and night-lights. See at v. 39, **he spread a cloud for a covering (from the sun) and fire to give light by night.** No light bulbs to replace, no electricity needed. There it was, every night, a fire above the campgrounds that gave light to the tent-living community of nearly 3 million people.

In v. 37, it says **no one stumbled.** Everyone was in good health and full of energy and eager to walk the miles to be rid of Egypt. You'll recall the scriptures also say, that their **ankles never swelled nor did their shoes wear out.** God watched out for their health and their clothes knowing they didn't have a Walmart nearby!

This was probably the first thanksgiving – only with **quail** – and in the Sinai! They had **meat, bread and spring water** ... in the desert! Why? v. 42 ... because God doesn't forget his promises like the one to Abraham. Again, what was that promise? For a **thousand generations, Israel will dwell in Canaan** – present day Israel. It's an **everlasting agreement** (v.10). Thus all the promises of God including the soon return of Jesus, the resurrection and immortality will certainly happen. Give thanks for that lesson and reminder.

Psalm 105:43-45 (Settlement of Canaan) (NIV)

43 He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy; **44** he gave them the lands of the nations, and they fell heir to what others had toiled for— **45** that they might keep his precepts and observe his laws. Praise the Lord.

Why is God so good to mankind? Verse 45: **To the end that they (nations) should keep God's statutes (his good laws).** Give thanks for this lesson.

Conclusion

So, as the sea churned threatening the Pilgrim's ship, they sang Psalms in the wine-soaked 'tween decks' until one ungodly crewmember complained! Very likely, Ps. 105 was one of them.

The Pilgrims reflected and sang Israel's history learning the good lessons. As we sing and feast this Thanksgiving, recall the past and anticipate the future of a faithful God who always fulfills his promises!