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Witness



(Photo: Ruins of Capernaum, Israel 2019)

By

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~

“For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.”

Acts 22:15

~

Prologue

For some people, faith is found by simply reading the Bible and realizing it speaks divine truth. For others, belief in God and His offer of salvation is discovered via acquaintances, friends, family, or Christian teachers and preachers who have shared the gospel. For many, an impactful book written by a Christian author can start the low burning fires of faith. Still others may take their first step toward the Lord through hearing a spiritually moving piece of music such as a Christian song or hymn. Serious exposure to historical documentation and archaeological evidence can also provide an incredibly strong witness and testimony to the majesty, power, and presence of Almighty God and His work done for mankind upon this earth. For example, the cover photo of this book was taken in Capernaum, Israel and shows a portion of an ancient synagogue, a site where Jesus taught during His three years of ministry. Ruins such as these are innumerable throughout God's holy land and stand as an inarguable, effective witness to the validity of Scripture and the faith precepts taught within. No matter how spiritual revelation unfolds, God meets us all where we are at, and then invites us to follow Him as He leads the hungry soul into His saving grace, mercy, and promise of everlasting life.

Most of my poems have typically been written with the intent to edify and bless fellow believers with verses magnifying God, Jesus Christ, Christian faith, and the Bible. But recently, the Lord began inspiring me to compile a poetry book which specifically seeks to introduce spiritual truth to the agnostic, the skeptic, the spiritually indifferent, and the seeker. My hope is to share biblically based poems and songs which would teach and touch hearts. Perhaps, by the rich grace and mercy of our wonderful God, readers would be blessed and find within themselves new seeds of faith planted. It is from this premise I have compiled the collection at hand. Poems both old and new are contained in this volume – the former taken from other poetry books previously published, and the latter written exclusively for this one. I pray these works glorify God and shine a bright light on the gift of eternal love and salvation He offers to those He holds most precious - mankind. May He bless this book and use it as a strong witness of His everlasting reality in the lives of all who read its pages.

Amen

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Ruins at Capernaum, Israel 2019

Witness

*Standing as a pillar on the border
A witness of salvation to the lost
Like a pile of stones and binding mortar
A marker pointing to the ground Christ bought*

*My life and words, a message and a sign
Inviting all who pass to find the gate
For by it one can cross the great divide
And enter lands where every soul is saved*

*The boundary walls are far too high to climb
And thus there is a single, narrow way
So, like a well-lit lantern I will shine
Directing all to walk God's road of faith*

*A monument to truth, I testify
A witness founded on the Rock of Christ*

“Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you...” (Joshua 24:27)

He Says, "Come"

*Come and lay your burdens down
He calls you from afar
You're not meant to walk alone
Seek Him where you are*

*Bring your heavy-laden soul
Place it in His arms
The Shepherd who has paid your toll
Will mend what has been torn*

*Without God, you sought to be
A life lived on the run
The Lord speaks from eternity
And He beckons, "Come"*

*Uphill, pointless fight you wage
For what's already won
It is time to turn the page
Jesus Christ says, "Come"*

*Swap the night for heaven's light
Let His love shine down
Drink in deep the water of life
If you are thirsty, "Come"*

*The sheep of His pasture graze
On the good seed He has sown
Blessings follow all His ways
He says to you, "Come"*

“Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

Compass

*The tool to navigate this dusty road
Wears not a face of glass or magnet pin
Nor rounded metal jacket dipped in gold
The way to life's true north is set within*

*Instructing roads of travel day or night
Abundant with direction as life's guide
Sustaining pilgrims in God's glorious light
He whispers, "go this way, don't turn aside"*

*This instrument I hold will never fail
And many holy words live in its scrolls
It's worthy for commanding narrow trails
Informing of good ways and paths of old*

*My soul is resting safe behind faith's shield
And blade bright as the rising sun I wield*



(Studying in the ruins of Masada, Dead Sea, Israel 2019)

“The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

As Good As It Gets

*You've achieved all you set out to do
Tomorrow asks what's next
There's really nothing left to prove
Is this as good as it gets*

*Or maybe nothing works out right
The ducks are never in a row
Every hope seems an endless fight
What is the point of all this woe*

*Some are cursed with tedium
The same old work, a different day
Working fingers to the bone
Having ceaseless bills to pay*

*Whether bored or just defeated
There is a time to contemplate
When it feels like you've been cheated
Staring down at an empty plate*

*Is there something more to life
Than everything you've seen and done
A hidden treasure worth the dive
A deeper meaning yet to come*

*When your heart wails discontent
Take note of the nagging void
It's a message the empty spirit sends
Asking you to seek God's voice*

*It is the absence of His presence
Making life feel so unfinished
The inner vacuum makes one restless
Disappointed and conflicted*

*Take the hand which God has offered
Before the glow of your sun sets
For if you hold it off much longer
This is as good as it will get*

I See God

*In the softly falling rain
Silver lining of a cloud
Love that steadily remains
Fields of promise plowed
I see God, yes, I see God*

*Break of dawn or edge of night
On the road or safe at home
Lowest low or highest height
Any hill or vale I roam
I see God, yes, I see God*

*In a sigh of gentle breeze
Or the warmth of sun's caress
As I pray upon my knees
Through a season of distress
I see God, yes, I see God*

*And when the winter ends
Clock of mine, it shall wind down
But His angels He will send
And bring me to His throne
I will see God, yes, I will see God*



“Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)

Out of the Boat

*Sometimes the waters rest
Calm beneath the boat
Soft breezes fill the mast
Cruising along life's coast*

*Easy work in fairest weather
When the ride is smooth
We think we have it all together
The oars in steady groove*

*Playing captain at the wheel
Navigating on our own
Eyes set on what is seen
While ignoring the unknown*

*For some of us the only way
God gains our full attention
Are the storms with those crashing waves
To rock our boat's direction*

*Foul winds force us to realize
We're not in control
As torrid rains blind our sight
God's mercies, we grab hold*

*It's when we face threat of death
Our need is recognized
There's a God who gave us breath
And with Him we must get right*

*Time to be like Apostle Paul
And climb out of the boat
Answer well the Lord's firm call
Trust Him with your soul*

*The very first step of faith
Is the biggest leap
But you will surely walk the waves
If eyes on Him you keep*



Boat on the Sea of Galilee, Israel 2019

What is Truth

*Immutable and unchanging
Withstands no rearranging
Reality is bound by its laws
From it, every science draws*

*Its rejection brings lawlessness
Its denial defeats all justice
Defining what is good and evil
Its only source is God not people*

*Without it, there is no right or wrong
To it wisdom and insight belong
Its absence perverts all morality
Which brings a nation to its knees*

*Souls are crushed by its lack
Purposeless and way off track
Turmoil reigns where truth does not
For order only comes from God*

*He spoke it in the very beginning
By it the earth sustains its spinning
Truth is His Son and the Holy Word
It is life and health to the world*

This is Truth

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” (John 17:7)

“The entirety of Your word is truth.” (Psalm 119:160)

Pearl of Great Price

*A pearl of great price
So deep undersea
Far from all light
You sought after me*

*Softly Your voice
Broke through my prison
You lifted my soul
Graced with new vision*

*Your love washed me clean
Of ocean's foul mire
Revealing gem's sheen
Spirit-led and inspired*

*You left heaven's gates
To purchase my soul
A treasure misplaced
Now in settings of gold*

*Your own precious jewel
I belong in your hand
My heart You now rule
Your will, my command*

Amen!

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45,46)

Sonnet on the Absence of God

*The Lord is light and life and divine love
Without Him darkness, death, and sin will thrive
He offers higher ways from up above
But man refuses rule from Paradise*

*All darkness is the absence of His light
And hatred fills the void in empty hearts
A world rejecting God endures this plight
For evil will invade where God is not*

*Free will is what He gave to all mankind
And life without His presence many choose
Much wickedness and violence we will find
When every truth of God has been refused*

*The sorry state of earth is human choice
The consequence of tuning out His voice*

Selah

The Good Shepherd

*The Shepherd searches for all the lost sheep
Directionless, cast on hazardous trails
So ragged and worn, for these His heart weeps
Scattered and bleating their strength slowly fails*

*He's calling each one by name and with love
His still small voice only heard in the soul
The good Shepherd reaches down from above
And rescues those lambs who want to be whole*

*Prized higher than sparrows, is fallen man
More loved than violet meadows are we
The hair on our heads He counts in His hand
Desiring our love for eternity*

*For you He will search, a staff He carries
To guide or chasten until you come home
Patiently waiting, as you grow weary
And finally stumble into His arms*

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep and am known by My own.: (John 10:14)



Shepherd's Fields – Bethlehem, Israel 2019

Where God is Found

*God cannot be found, in a building or a name
In religion's empty tomb, too many souls lay slain*

*For rules do not atone, churches cannot save
Rituals God wants none, no penance we can pay*

*Not a vague higher being, nor an unknowable power
Not a spiritual feeling, to be felt in a fine rain shower*

*You also will not find, a faith in God that saves
By searching in your mind, or opinions of the day*

*There is no eternal strength, in a deity we design
The earth's only Founder, Scripture alone defines*

*God is our Almighty Maker, with a holy, loving nature
The world's only Creator, mankind's only Savior*

*He is Father, Spirit, Son, a three-fold, holy Being
He can be personally known, by those who bend the knee*

*The manuscripts are true, those ancient scrolls divine
Your Creator died for you, redemption's sacrifice*

*The God of the Bible, He wants our relationship
For this we are held liable, as long as we shall live*

*Spirits born anew, is the only way He gave
By Christ's death for you, is your salvation gained*

*Repentance and belief, in the Savior from above
Are God-given keys, to open heaven's doors*

*The place to obtain truth, is in the only Book
God's long-written proof, of all He undertook*

*So open up its pages, and pray to understand
Holy Word of the ages, written by the Spirit's hand*

Broad River

*In this dry and barren place
There is for us a broad river flowing
Bring the stricken, hollow face
Into verdant valleys rolling*

*The Lord's majestic streams
Rushing cheerful and full of life
With abundance and prosperity
The soul's lush paradise*

*It is wisdom to choose well
And feed on the Lord's sweet gifts
Beside His broad rivers we dwell
Joyful currents running swift*

*His promises refresh the weary
His riverbanks sing of peace
In this fallen world so dreary
Take your fill of His fruitful seeds*

*His Spirit is our broad river
In deserts and wilderness
Of love He's the endless Giver
Living water our soul's defense*

*Like an oasis in arid sand
Drawing forth all who deeply thirst
The Lord's well-watered land
Is His Presence and His Holy Word*

“But there the majestic LORD will be for us, a place of broad rivers and streams...”
(Isaiah 33:21)



Jordan River, Israel 2019

The Life He Gives

*There is a promise in each day given
A chance to learn and grow deeper our faith
With past, present, and future forgiven
How then shall we live but to seek His face*

*Like branches on vines shall we prosper forth
Fed well on the Spirit and Bread of Life
Bearing much fruit, Living Water the source
Draws souls to God and His great paradise*

*No other purpose soars higher than this
The paths God chooses for us are divine
Tranquil or troubled, to know Him is bliss
Through our broken vessels His love can shine*

*Each day an adventure walking with Him
The life He gives fills my cup to the brim*

“You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

(Psalm 23:5,6)

I Found Where I Belong

*I ran around in my younger years
A foolish willful child
Shed so many unneeded tears
My soul wears unnecessary miles*

*Never feeling like I fit in
Though not for lack of trying
Grabbed hold of every vice and sin
At the time they seemed satisfying*

*Walked the ways of this fickle world
Because that's all I ever knew
Such a careless naive girl
Always had something to prove*

*There came a point I began to reap
All the troubles I had freely sown
Winds of failure so harshly sweep
Broken marriage, broken home*

*I had taken a dead wrong turn
Thought I'd done everything right
But what was built lay toppled and burned
And with no solutions in sight*

*It was then the Lord reached down
Speaking quietly to my heart
Picked me up with His strong arms
A new journey I then did start*

*I took His book and began to read
So much I wish I'd known all along
The fires of faith lit inside of me
In His embrace, I found where I belong*

Leave the Night

*Darkness like the midnight hour, far from any village lights
Veils the mind of every soul unlit by God above
Heaven calling, the Lord is drawing, blinded eyes to leave the night
So appalling, men keep stalling, at the offer of His love
Ice of apathy is thawing, slowly falling, sensing Spirit's dove
Hearts laid bare, like hands bereft of gloves*

*Scripture's truth can be revealed, to those who turn the precious page
And drink in fully all God's light has shone
Penetrating, soul's thirst slaking, waters of true life thus rage
Grace amazing, man needs saving, Jesus Christ has overcome
Faith's dawn breaking, new awakening, to the King who sits enthroned
Who will choose, to know Him and become known*

*Conscience touched by unseen Hand, knocking on a fastened door
Open to invite love's warmth, as of the glorious sun
If contrary, choose to bury, cognizance of divine power
All must carry, while life tarries, an answer to the Holy One
Ceaseless query, extraordinary, asked until last breath is done
What will you do with God's begotten Son*

Halfway Between

*One of life's great mysteries
The dichotomy on this earth
So much beauty can be seen
Yet ugliness wields its curse*

*Joy secures a place in us
Then sorrow drives it out
Miraculous, the gift of love
Amidst the hatred that abounds*

*Fighting against wickedness
Are the works of the redeemed
The guilty injure the innocent
But faith will reign supreme*

*Too close to hell's blazing fires
Too far from heaven's gleam
The earth is stranded on a wire
Spinning halfway in between*

*The goodness of God's paradise
Brightens these fallen grounds
But Hades' shadows dim the skies
Making souls of men confound*

*Hide this knowledge in your heart
For one day the time will come
From this earth you will depart
Heaven or hell, your eternal home*

*Only while your soul resides
Between these shadowed two
Lays the choice of death or life
Which one shall you choose?*

The Eyes of the Lord

*The eyes of the Lord
Are never shut
No moment is ignored
For He sleeps not*

*The eyes of the Lord
Shall never fail
All our doings He records
With great detail*

*The eyes of the Lord
Will never tire
He watches and adores
From His throne of fire*

*The eyes of the Lord
With mercy stream
As rebellion's sin He bore
Mankind redeemed*

*The eyes of the Lord
Search to and fro
His Spirit implores
Every seeking soul*

*The eyes of the Lord
Shine endless love
He paid what we can't afford
Using His own blood*

*The eyes of the Lord
See the hearts He won
Down His grace is poured
On every new life begun*

Recovery

*Sifting through the rubble, of what's become my life
Trying not to let past shards stab me like a knife
There are fragments of great value that I'm searching for
I put them in my pocket in hopes of learning more*

*How did I get here, and what moment stopped the clock?
Looking in a blackened mirror, my face stares back in shock
What day did time stand still, and my whole life start to bleed?
Yet it surely must be God's very best will for me
And in faith, I shall begin a recovery*

*Now I stand with empty hands, trying to move forward.
A truth my heart clings to, of second chances God has great stores
Wiping sorrow's ashes, off the surface of my soul
Jesus pulls me from the pile, of disaster's smoking coals*

*How did I get here, and what moment stopped the clock?
Looking in a blackened mirror, my face stares back in shock
What day did time stand still, and my whole life start to bleed?
Yet it surely must be God's very best will for me
And in faith, I shall begin a recovery*

*Turning my weary eyes, to the bright and blazing sun
Feeling heavens rays of God's countenance shining down.
Thrown aside are the tattered rags, that I wore yesterday
There's a brightly lit and narrow path, I'm walking and on my way.
Because of faith, I am recovering*

I Am All You Need

*My peace I leave with you, He says
You don't have to worry anymore
Wait on My promises, they'll come to pass
As sure as the ocean rolls to shore*

*My peace, My peace I leave, if to My heart you cleave
Rest your spirit in My hand, for I am all you'll ever need
My peace, My peace, I leave*

*My strength I bring to you, today
You don't have to be weak anymore
Cast your cares upon Me, I will sustain
My Spirit preserves evermore*

*My strength, My strength I leave, if to My heart you cleave
Rest your spirit in My hand, for I am all you'll ever need
My strength, My strength, I leave*

*My light I'll shine along your way
No need to fight darkness anymore
My Word a lamp of truth, as bright as day
I'll make your crooked pathways straight*

*My light, My light I leave, if to My heart you cleave
Rest your spirit in My hand, for I am all you'll ever need
My light, My light I leave*

*My love I give to you each day
You will not be lonely from now on
I'm with you always, in your spirit I'll stay
Wherever you go, I'll come along*

*My love, My love I leave, if to My heart you cleave
Rest your spirit in My hand, for I am all you'll ever need
My love, My love I leave*

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.
Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)

Eternity Walked in Flesh

*His highest glory restrained
Confined within time and matter
God dwelt among humanity's shame
To become sin's final answer*

*Beyond all our comprehension
His infinity wrapped in a cloak
To gain the heart's attention
Of desperately seeking folk*

*The flow of His endless power
Was held in mortality's grip
Surrendered to darkest hour
Suffering thorns and stinging whip*

*His everlasting might
He withheld to save our souls
On the cross He won the fight
To make the faithful person whole*

*Forever gave itself away
Submitting for a moment to death
What was lost now can be saved
Belief brings the Spirit's breath*

*Sacred divinity was concealed
By an average face and dress
The greatest love of God revealed
When eternity walked in flesh*

Forgotten

*We have forgotten who we are
Life's purpose seems a mystery
Upon our spirits lays a scar
Of Eden's vanished memory*

*Gone is knowledge of why we're here
Existence seems a cryptic game
Life a fog of chaos and tears
Soul's amnesia holds the blame*

*Cobwebs rest on darkened walls
Of chambers long since vacated
God echoes through empty halls
In the souls Satan has sedated*

*Former glory still resonates
Deep inside every human heart
But a fracture now separates
Born with holy bonds ripped apart*

*Ancient ties to Almighty God
Were severed by rebellion's fate
Aimless are the paths we trod
Fallen man can't find his way*

*In the beginning it was not so
God and man walked together with love
On Eden's soil, under heaven's glow
All guidance came from up above*

*Praise and worship ever poured
From the hearts of man and wife
Understanding was given and stored
Within their spirits blazing divine life*

*Remember who you were meant to be
And recognize why you were born
Learn of the One who reigns eternally
From Whom your soul has been torn*

*Find the way back to your purpose
It's through the narrow gate of Jesus Christ
Without God our existence is worthless
For with Him we were meant to abide*

The Hand that Moves

*I raise my head to seek
The Hand that moves all things
In the heavens, on the earth, in the lives of men*

*I try to be aligned
With the Hand that does provide
Fulfilling my every need, time and again*

*To God I've given my soul
His is the Hand that holds
With His grasp on me, I now have peace within*

*I must heed every calling
From the Hand laid upon me
He will complete every work He has begun*

*I pray for the rebellious
Who are subject to the Hand that stretches
In wrathful judgment no one can outrun*

*I point to the Son He gave
His is the Hand that saves
His sacrifice is freely offered to everyone*

*There's no excuse, for it has been proved
His is the Hand that moves
Heaven and earth to accomplish our salvation*

A Higher View

*In living only for oneself
Belief in God refused
Bars are on your windowsills
And the prisoner is you*

*Seeking happiness alone
Leads to discontent
Wear yourself to the bone
Every effort will lay spent*

*Seeing life through shutters
Distorts the bigger picture
Like a beggar in the gutters
Blind and growing bitter*

*Open up your windows
Swing wide the prison doors
Leave rebellion's limbo
The Lord gives so much more*

*Get above your own thoughts
Tear the veil from unseeing eyes
The ways of man come to nought
Without God's presence in his life*

*Pursue what is not visual
Beyond the blue skies above
Ascend to what is spiritual
Learn the freedom of a dove*

*When focus is lifted upward
All grace will be given you
By the One who has suffered
To bring you a higher view*



View of Galilee from atop Mount Arbel, Israel 2019

Remedy

*The defeated and broken descend a well of despair
To a deep-seated withering and hopelessness found there
Feelings of emptiness and fainting of the soul
A harbinger of doom refusing to let go*

*Desperately we look for ways to make the aching lessen
But no bandage seems to cover the wounds of our depression
Pharmacies and therapists flood the world with their cures
But their solutions cannot dry the starving spirit's tears*

*For melancholy surprisingly is not borne of emotion
No remedy can ever be found in this world's potions
The affliction is not physical, no medicine heals the hurt
Nor is it of the mind as many doctors would assert*

*The problem is a spiritual one, at its deepest core
Depression is a symptom of a heart that cries for more
Born without God's Spirit, we've a hidden, gaping hole
Until we're filled with His light, gloom can etch the soul*

*If you've tried to climb your way out of misery's prison
But instead you find yourself a constant, hopeless victim
It's time to seek the only One who can make you whole
A living faith in Jesus Christ brings healing of the soul*

*When you believe in the sacrifice of God's begotten Son
His Spirit will glow within, and every chain shall come undone
No longer does the heart cry out for its divine Creator
The empty hole is filled in full by the Presence of the Savior*

The God Who Sees

*The Lord of Hosts looks down on us and sees
The ceaseless ebb and flow of life on earth
Though we despair of trials and travesties
The God who sees will still perform His work*

*And when we slide into a place of sin
Or choose to practice what the Lord forbids
Don't think it is a secret kept from Him
For from the God who sees there's nothing hid*

*In times of celebration and great joy
As happiness and thankfulness abound
He loves to hear our praise with lifted voice
The God who sees shall with His love surround*

*Though we may feel as if we walk alone
The God who sees has always come along*

“Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees;
for she said, “Have I also here seen Him who sees me?” (Genesis 16:13)

Too Human to Care

*Our minds are so occupied with what is seen
We spend life polishing a mirror
It's dim reflection obscures soul's reality
And we're just too human to care*

*We're born into this world lacking the best part
The image of God we were to bear
Without His holy presence glowing in the heart
Our spirits are dead to His loving care*

*God reaches down trying to show the truth
But the flesh overrules, so unaware
Matters not at all when offered heaven's proof
The rebellious are too human to care*

*The addict's life is trickling down the drain
The skeptic is facing death with fear
Blind to the One who frees them from sin's reign
Too caught up in their vices to care*

*Families are losing sight of love and charity
The Lord created for them to share
Without His Spirit reigning, pride is their defeat
Angry hearts too human to care*

*The hours grow shorter as time empties out
The edge of existence drawing near
God's convicting voice is raising to a shout
But the deaf are too human to care*

*If only the looking glass could reveal the soul
We'd see our true emptiness there
And understand why only God can fill the hole
His transforming love leads us to care*

Heaven is Given Away

*Paradise timeless
All wickedness gone
City of diamonds
Air filled with song*

*God's love endless
Everlasting dawn
Each soul precious
Held close in His arms*

*Hearts swoon breathless
Peace finally owned
Joy in His presence
And His splendid throne*

*Beautiful horizons
Living river flows
God's light shining
On cobbled streets of gold*

*Abundance matchless
Gardens of grace
Edenic palace
Accessed only by faith*

*Eternity priceless
No cost to attain
By the One Who is righteous
Heaven is given away*

His Love Answers

*Disheveled child sat down to cry
In a torn and dirty dress
Looked around for her Father's smile
But she has wandered and lost her steps*

*She called for Him with mournful wail
So helpless and alone
Immediately and without fail
He rose to embrace His own*

*An angry boy ran far away
To streets he did not know
Suddenly, fear filled his face
He had strayed too far from home*

*With ragged sigh, he fell and wept
Tired and fury spent
Prayed to God with heaving chest
Loving arms met his lament*

*We wrest ourselves from God's gentle hands
In wayward, fickle tempers
Caught up in our own demands
For ill-begotten ventures*

*And so we trip and fall at last
Broken and forlorn
The Lord's love answers as we ask
Forgiving all our wrongs*

This Present Darkness

*In this present darkness, no one sees the hidden war
The battle is not of flesh or blood, and we don't hear the devil's roar
Where no light shines, only chaos reigns, souls falling in defeat
Hungry for every human life, Satan's sifting us like wheat*

*In this present darkness, hope and joy seem futile dreams
Happiness sought in wickedness is never what it seems
Hiding true revelation, this world wears a darkened cloak
Distracted by our busy lives, hell and heaven seem a silly joke*

*In this present darkness, understanding is destroyed
Wisdom's candle sparsely burns, while blindness fills the void
Selfishness reigns as king, upon countless dreadful thrones
Ruling without truth or vision, ever weary we shall become*

*In this present darkness, we must awaken from the night
Cast off all our burdens and equip ourselves to fight
We are wounded warriors, struggling for our very souls
Giving ourselves up to God; through Christ we reach the goal*

*In this present darkness, the only ones who remain standing
Are those who wear the Lord's armor and the Holy Spirit's branding
Where illumination falters, at gloomy shadows cast from hell
We soldier on with the lamp of God and living water from His well*

*In this present darkness
Find the Light
In this present darkness
Shine the Light
In this present darkness
Abide in the Light*

Fruit

*There is a vine of abundant blessing
Bearing the richest fruit
God provides His own vine-dressing
And His Son is the root*

*His Spirit courses through like sap
Feeding the lush green leaves
Around the precious fruit they wrap
Watered well by faith's belief*

*Plentiful is the fruit of love
It hangs within reach of all
Joy and peace are bountiful
Likewise patience and self-control*

*Seeds of kindness and goodness sprout
From every branch and twig
Gentle ways flower great amounts
Faithfulness blooming sweet*

*If you've been searching for such fruit
It can be grown within yourself
Let the seeds of faith take their root
And in the holy Scriptures dwell*

*Abide secure in the love of Christ
Open your heart and let Him in
Fruit of the Spirit will grow inside
As a new branch, you are grafted in*

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser...Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (John 15:1,4)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22,23)



A fruit stand in Tel Aviv, Israel 2019

Cruising Through the Night

*So many souls, wandering this life
As if driving cars, cruising through the night
But not bothering to turn on the headlights
There is no destination
Can't see current location
Careening toward the edge of time without any sight*

*Like unwitting shoppers, wandering a vacant store
Aisles black and empty, no way to explore
And having no idea what they're looking for
They are lacking vision
On a pathway to collision
Roaming eerie shadows, they can't find the exit door*

*So many people, are lost in the dark
Because of innate sin, mankind is born marked
Destined for anguish without God's holy spark
Feet are blindly stumbling
To the ground they're tumbling
Understanding shaded, their futures looming stark*

*Some who grow weary, start humbling their pride
Eyes turning upward, they sense God's beaming light
Night then fades away, as Jesus' love does shine
Radiance is streaming
Narrow way is gleaming
Walking up faith's mountain, heaven's gate now beckons bright*

Refuge

*There is a place we can run to
For peace and endless grace
An eternal, wooden refuge
Holy blood pooled at the base*

*Knobbed beams, splintered holes
Built for sin's disgrace
On forbidding ancient pole
His beaten arms were splayed*

*King of all kings, He came
To save us from the wrath
He took rebellion's blame
Had it nailed to His own hands*

*This timber sanctified
By our Lord's most selfless act
My Savior crucified
For the indifferent heart I had*

*Whomsoever hears His call
Can flee to heaven's cross
It is our refuge standing tall
Rugged witness of His scars*

*We cling to sacred lumber
And the blood of Jesus Christ
Forever safe under His cover
Salvation won by iron spikes*

*Unseen refuge walks with me
As I bear His cross in faith
And I will never lack His peace
For my soul He has set free*

The View from Down Here

*Like sands in a desert storm
Swirl overwhelmingly
Threatening to bring harm
When the eyes cannot see*

*Since the fall of man
Sin makes truth obscure
Hard to behold God's hand
With the view from down here*

*Fog drifts thick at times
Cutting off all vision
So, too, we feel blind
When making a decision*

*Like a dim reflection
From a clouded mirror
Unclear is the direction
With the view from down here*

*Why must we look through
Such a blurred windowpane
God declares it's for me and you
To learn to walk by faith*

*We increase our trust
In His voice as we seek to hear
For His guidance is a must
With the view from down here*

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.” (1st Corinthians 13:12)

Wilderness

*The dirt beneath my feet
Is baked hard and dry
Unforgiving heat
Gives no chance for life*

*The dust in the air
Chokes as I breathe in
Seems more than I can bear
This wilderness I'm in*

*Barren rocky ground
Stretches beyond sight
Thirst makes the head pound
Desert sun glares bright*

*Water lies ahead
Shimmering so blue
But it's a sea so dead
Fatal to consume*

*I wander, losing hope
And gasp a desperate prayer
Reaching stony slope
I climb the dusty stair*

*A faint trickling sound
Soon a glimpse of green
Oasis, I have found
Water splashing clean*

*Giving thanks, I kneel
Drinking precious flow
Of the fountain God revealed
To save my dying soul*



Negev and the Dead Sea, Israel 2019





The oasis of En Gedi, Dead Sea, Israel, 2019



Rolling

*Into this world we're born
Without a care except our own
And we toil among the thorns
Sweat and blood until the tomb*

*The older we become
The hours increase their spin
Though we think we are strong
All our ways will wear us thin*

*We are a people rolling
Rushing rapid down a hill
Without even knowing
At the end there is a bill*

*Like waters swiftly flowing
Crashing over rocky falls
Life is never slowing
Though we long for death to stall*

*Disregarding what awaits
At the bottom of this ride
Accepting perilous fate
In our foolishness and pride*

*There's a better way to travel
Stop rolling carelessly
Time is short, change the channel
Let's slow down, taking heed*

*To our Creator we owe all
We miss the point if we ignore
His constant loving call
And the price our Savior bore*

The Beginning of Wisdom

*From the call of Abraham and his son's near sacrifice
To climbing Jacob's ladder in the middle of the night
The beginning of their wisdom was a holy fear of God
His divine revelation paved the paths those men trod*

*From the burning bush of Moses, blazing with God's light
To people living in darkness who have seen a great light
Wisdom springs from reverence planted in the heart
Increasing with obedience and deep, prayerful thought*

*From Joshua's great bravery and Gideon's trembling
To the loyalty of lady Ruth and David's deadly sling
Monumental moments placed throughout history
Show us the fear of God is wisdom's true beginning*

*From the request of Solomon when he first became king
To Hezekiah's plight, in the Lord's house he did bring
Humble hearts and faithful deeds achieve God's victories
Knowledge of the Holy One deepens understanding*

*From Ezra's reconstruction and Nehemiah's walls
To the stunning tragedy of Job's terrible downfall
It is faith and reverence which pleases the mighty Lord
And godly fear, the only way wisdom is outpoured*

*From Daniel's steadfast prayers despite the king's new law
To the power of the prophets and apostles' wherewithal
Only fear of the living God instills spiritual triumph
Let's live in profound awe, walking wisely in His guidance*

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10)



Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount, Jerusalem, Israel 2019

The Little Things

*Like pennies from a pocket
Scattered on the ground
A chain drops its locket
And it's nowhere to be found*

*It seems the world has lost
The smaller things that matter
Profound, the hidden cost
Creating tragic patterns*

*God's mercies left untended
Abandoned by the heart
Broken bonds in need of mending
Or the seams will fall apart*

*Humility lies cast aside
And kindness must be bought
Famine surely reigns inside
Love lays strangled in a knot*

*Endless in the quest for gain
We've forgotten how to give
Bandages can't stop the pain
Of the crippled lives we live*

*How did those pockets rip
Losing all our inner treasures
Of charity, we've lost grip
Virtue scarcely measured*

*Time for us to gather
What was strewn so carelessly
Mercy, grace, and laughter
Let's love one another selflessly*

In the Garden

*Most woeful thing
Befell mankind
In the garden
Of Eden*

*Death's cruel sting
Love undermined
In the garden
Of Eden*

*One choice did bring
Sin-clouded minds
In the garden
Of Eden*

*Now all offspring
Are born blind
Since the garden
Of Eden*

*Purpose missing
Men refuse His light
Since the garden
Of Eden*

*Lost souls cling
To chains that bind
Since the garden
Of Eden*

*Tugging heartstrings
The Spirit reminds
Of the garden
In Eden*

*Origin sings
Of what was left behind
In the garden
Of Eden*

*Turn to the King
The Lord Jesus Christ
He will pardon
And give freedom*

*Salvation rings
Faith's victory shines
In heaven's garden
The new Eden*

Ode to God's Creatures

*Does a butterfly plan its roaming way
Or flutter along at God's direction?
Do birds consider their own melody
Singing praise to God in sheer affection?*

*When will we learn from His lovely creatures
How to conduct the measure of our lives?
Each one precious with God-given features
Shall we not each embrace His will likewise?*

*What manner of beast fights his Creator
Grasping to take what wasn't intended
Twisting against his own place in nature
Until all peace and joy are suspended*

*Tis only mankind who wrestles his Lord
His fallen heart unaware the discord*

Pieces of My Journey

*No, I have not traveled, as far as I should have
Seems like only yesterday, I walked out the door
If I'd heard His call, much earlier I could have
Started on this journey, so many years before*

*That special day God told me to leave all I knew
A sound tapping at the door, Jesus came to knock
As He stood there smiling, I put on walking shoes
He became my Shepherd when I joined His flock*

*Light of understanding, spilled brightly on my path
Suddenly this whole world started making sense
I'd been living without God; a new course I did map
No more lack of purpose or pursuing emptiness*

*Twenty years and more have passed, I keep strolling on
Finding joy in every day, and peace despite some scars
Thankful for the journey, this heart still hums His song
He's walking right beside me, my soul He closely guards*

*Perhaps there will yet be several miles for me to go
But if that's not His plan, I'm submitted to His will
Each step taken in His Name, He causes me to grow
This lowly earthen vessel, His love shall always fill*

*Every day a passage, just traveling through time
As pieces of this journey are collected in my soul
The hours hold our stories, unfolding line by line
One day the pen will cease, and my book will be full*

Amen

The End