Catholic Theme: Mystery, Wonder and Awe
Scripture Story

Moses and the Burning Bush
Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.”

Exodus 3: 1 – 6
Description and Related Topics

**Mystery**, in biblical usage, generally refers to a divine secret that is being, or has been, revealed in God’s good time, denoting primarily what God has decreed shall take place in the future (i.e. the eschatological secret to be made known).

The term is actually only used once in the synoptic Gospels (Mk. 4: 11, Mt. 13: 11, Lk. 8: 10) in the context of the Parable of the Sower; namely, that it is only to the apostles and disciples of Jesus that the secrets of the kingdom of God have been revealed and entrusted.

St. Paul further refines this notion of mysterion by linking it directly to the risen Christ in whom is the realization of salvation and which is effected presently through the Church, the Body of Christ. Thus the paschal mystery of Jesus’ suffering, death, rising and ascension lies at the very heart of God’s salvific plan for all of creation.

In a more general theological sense, mystery is any religious truth known only through divine revelation and accepted on faith. Since the content of the revelation will always elude complete understanding, it often excites curiosity and may elicit wonder and awe.

**Wonder** may be understood as a response of a person who beholds some mystery or gains some new or deeper insight into the nature of a “natural” or seemingly “supernatural” reality. It may be a feeling of surprise, astonishment, amazement or admiration. It also may be born of a new or deeper insight related to a seemingly ordinary or everyday occurrence but which is now appreciated in a new way.

**Awe** may be understood as a person’s mixed feeling of reverence, fear and wonder in the face of something majestic, sublime, or sacred. The effect of awe may be temporarily immobilizing and often elicits a display of homage, worship and/or deference.

**Anchor Concepts:** Creativity/Design, Discovery, Faith, Lifestyle, Redemption, Revelation, Solidarity, Transformation/Conversion

**Related Concepts:**
- SACRAMENTALITY (PRINCIPLE OF)
- SACRAMENT
- WORSHIP
- HUMILITY
- WORLD VIEW
- REVELATION
- CREATION
- NATURE
- PASCHAL MYSTERY
- SALVATION
- CONVERSION
- INSIGHT
- TRANSCENDENTAL
- SUPERNATURAL
- DIVINITY
- DISCOVERY
- WISDOM
- WEB OF LIFE
- PRAYER
- SPIRITUALITY
- CREATION SPIRITUALITY
- MYSTIC
- MYSTICISM
- DESIGN
- AESTHETICS
- ORIGINALITY
- GIFTS/TALENTS
- WONDER
- AWE
- MYSTERY
- CREATIVITY
- TRUTH
- RESURRECTION
- INCARNATION
- INSIGHT
Scripture References

Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath
In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Genesis 1

Moses and Pharaoh
The Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and I will multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. When Pharaoh does not listen to you, I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring my people the Israelites, company by company, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The
Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them." Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the Lord commanded them. Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a wonder,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, and it will become a snake.' " So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as the Lord had commanded; Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same by their secret arts. Each one threw down his staff, and they became snakes; but Aaron's staff swallowed up theirs. Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water; stand by at the river bank to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that was turned into a snake. Say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to say, "Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness." But until now you have not listened.' Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord." See, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall be turned to blood. The fish in the river shall die, the river itself shall stink, and the Egyptians shall be unable to drink water from the Nile." The Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, "Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over its rivers, its canals, and its ponds, and all its pools of water—so that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout the whole land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone."" Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and of his officials he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the river, and all the water in the river was turned into blood. The river stank so that the Egyptians could not drink its water, and there was blood throughout the whole land of Egypt. But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts; so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them; as the Lord had said. Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. And all the Egyptians had to dig along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the river. Seven days passed after the Lord had struck the Nile.

Exodus 7

The Lord Answers Job and Job's Response
Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?—when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped'? "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? It is changed like clay under the seal, and it is dyed like a garment. Light is withheld from the wicked, and their uplifted arm is broken. "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this. "Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? Surely you know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great! "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth? "Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain, and a way for the thunderbolt, to bring rain on a land where no one lives, on the desert, which is empty of human life, to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground put forth grass? "Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew? From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven? The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that a
flood of waters may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings, so that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are?’ Who has put wisdom in the inward parts, or given understanding to the mind? Who has the wisdom to number the clouds? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, when the dust runs into a mass and the clods cling together? "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, or lie in wait in their covert? Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for lack of food?

"Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer? Can you number the months that they fulfill, and do you know the time when they give birth, when they crouch to give birth to their offspring, and are delivered of their young? Their young ones become strong, they grow up in the open; they go forth, and do not return to them. "Who has let the wild ass go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift ass, to which I have given the steppe for its home, the salt land for its dwelling place? It scorns the tumult of the city; it does not hear the shouts of the driver. It ranges the mountains as its pasture, and it searches after every green thing. "Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will it spend the night at your crib? Can you tie it in the furrow with ropes, or will it harrow the valleys after you? Will you depend on it because its strength is great, and will you hand over your labour to it? Do you have faith in it that it will return, and bring your grain to your threshing floor? "The ostrich’s wings flap wildly, though its pinions lack plumage. For it leaves its eggs to the earth, and lets them be warmed on the ground, forgetting that a foot may crush them, and that a wild animal may trample them. It deals cruelly with its young, as if they were not its own; though its labour should be in vain, yet it has no fear; because God has made it forget wisdom, and given it no share in understanding. When it spreads its plumage aloft, it laughs at the horse and its rider. "Do you give the horse its might? Do you clothe its neck with mane? Do you make it leap like the locust? Its majestic snorting is terrible. It paws violently, exults mightily; it goes out to meet the weapons. It laughs at fear, and is not dismayed; it does not turn back from the sword. Upon it rattle the quiver, the flashing spear, and the javelin. With fierceness and rage it swallows the ground; it cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet. When the trumpet sounds, it says 'Aha!' From a distance it smells the battle, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. "Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and spreads its wings toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes its nest on high? It lives on the rock and makes its home in the fastness of the rocky crag. From there it spies the prey; its eyes see it from far away. Its young ones suck up blood; and where the slain are, there it is."

And the Lord said to Job: "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Anyone who argues with God must respond." Then Job answered the Lord: "See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but will proceed no further." Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Gird up your loins like a man; I will question you, and you declare to me. Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be justified? Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his? "Deck yourself with majesty and dignity; clothe yourself with glory and splendour. Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on all who are proud, and abase them. Look on all who are proud, and bring them low; tread down the wicked with greatness. "Shall a wise man answer? Shall He who is wise understand? "Who can understand knowledge? He who is short of wisdom is reproved. In the sight of God he cannot prepare himself; he cannot discover a thing. "Is it by your wisdom that the dromedary draws water? Or is it by your knowledge that the ostrich spreads her wings? "Is it with your wisdom that the snail provides for her head, and she dares to set forth on the face of the earth? "Shall one who is wise make victims? Will he who has knowledge offer sacrifices? Will he who is free from care sacrifice to the Lord? Will he who is ransomed offer him the spoil? "If only you had consented to my counsel, and then I would have set you rank among the princes of the earth. For your own sake, and not for mine, be patient and wait for me. For to you it shall be given; for your mouth shall speak to my heart; and the flesh of my flesh shall save you. "Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook, or press down its tongue with a cord? Can you put a rope in its nose, or pierce its jaw with a hook? Will it make many supplications to you? Will it speak soft words to you? Will it make a covenant with you to be taken as your servant forever? Will you play with it as with a bird, or will you put it on leash for your girls? Will traders bargain over it? Will they divide it up among the merchants? Can you fill its skin with harpoons, or its head with fishing spears? Lay hands on it; think of the battle; you will not do it again! Any hope of capturing it will be disappointed; were not even the gods
overwhelmed at the sight of it? No one is so fierce as to dare to stir it up. Who can stand before it? Who can confront it and be safe? --under the whole heaven, who? "I will not keep silence concerning its limbs, or its mighty strength, or its splendid frame. Who can strip off its outer garment? Who can penetrate its double coat of mail? 14 Who can open the doors of its face? There is terror all around its teeth. Its back is made of shields in rows, shut up closely as with a seal. One is so near to another that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another; they clasp each other and cannot be separated. Its sneezes flash forth light, and its eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn. From its mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap out. Out of its nostrils comes smoke, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. Its breath kindles coals, and a flame comes out of its mouth. In its neck abides strength, and terror dances before it. The folds of its flesh cling together; it is firmly cast and immovable. Its heart is as hard as stone, as hard as the lower millstone. When it raises itself up the gods are afraid; at the crashing they are beside themselves. Though the sword reaches it, it does not avail, nor does the spear, the dart, or the javelin. It counts iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make it flee; slingstones, for it, are turned to chaff. Clubs are counted as chaff; it laughs at the rattle of javelins. Its underparts are like sharp potsherds; it spreads itself like a threshing sledge on the mire. It makes the deep boil like a pot; it makes the sea like a pot of ointment. It leaves a shining wake behind it; one would think the deep to be white-haired. On earth it has no equal, a creature without fear. It surveys everything that is lofty; it is king over all that are proud."

Then Job answered the Lord: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me.' I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Job 38: 1—42:6

God’s Glory in Creation and the Law

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.
The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever;
the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
But who can detect their errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.
Keep back your servant also from the insolent;
do not let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalm 19

The Majesty of God’s Rule
The Lord is king, he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed,
he is girded with strength.
He has established the world;
it shall never be moved;
your throne is established from of old;
you are from everlasting.
The floods have lifted up, O Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their roaring.
More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters,
more majestic than the waves of the sea,
majestic on high is the Lord!
Your decrees are very sure;
holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.

Psalm 93

God the Creator and Provider
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honour and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.
You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
At your rebuke they flee;
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
They rose up to the mountains,
rang down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.
You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.
You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.
By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.
From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.
The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has its home in the fir trees.
The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the coneys.
You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.
When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens.
People go out to their work and to their labour until the evening.
O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.
There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.
These all look to you to give them their food in due season;
when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground.
May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works--
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord.
Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 104

Song of Quiet Trust
O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things too great
and too marvellous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time on and forevermore.

Psalm 131

The Inescapable God
O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.
For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.
O that you would kill the wicked, O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—
those who speak of you maliciously, and lift themselves up against you for evil!
Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.
Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139

Everything Has Its Time
For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time
to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to
break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to
dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time
to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a
time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to
hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1–8

Fear of the Lord Is True Wisdom
The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation, and gladness and a crown of rejoicing. The fear of the Lord
delights the heart, and gives gladness and joy and long life. Those who fear the Lord will have a happy
end; on the day of their death they will be blessed. To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; she is
created with the faithful in the womb.

She made among human beings an eternal foundation, and among their descendants she will abide
faithfully. To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom; she inebriates mortals with her fruits; she fills their whole
house with desirable goods, and their storehouses with her produce. The fear of the Lord is the crown of
wisdom, making peace and perfect health to flourish. She rained down knowledge and discerning
comprehension, and she heightened the glory of those who held her fast. To fear the Lord is the root of wisdom, and her branches are long life.

Sirach 1: 11–20

The Works of God in Nature
The Works of God in Nature I will now call to mind the works of the Lord, and will declare what I have seen. By the word of the Lord his works are made; and all his creatures do his will. The sun looks down on everything with its light, and the work of the Lord is full of his glory. The Lord has not empowered even his holy ones to recount all his marvellous works, which the Lord the Almighty has established so that the universe may stand firm in his glory. He searches out the abyss and the human heart; he understands their innermost secrets. For the Most High knows all that may be known; he sees from of old the things that are to come. He discloses what has been and what is to be, and he reveals the traces of hidden things. No thought escapes him, and nothing is hidden from him. He has set in order the splendours of his wisdom; he is from all eternity one and the same. Nothing can be added or taken away, and he needs no one to be his counsellor. How desirable are all his works, and how sparkling they are to see! All these things live and remain forever; each creature is preserved to meet a particular need. Each supplements the virtues of the other. Who could ever tire of seeing his glory?

The Splendour of the Sun
The pride of the higher realms is the clear vault of the sky, as glorious to behold as the sight of the heavens. The sun, when it appears, proclaims as it rises what a marvellous instrument it is, the work of the Most High. At noon it parches the land, and who can withstand its burning heat? A man tending a furnace works in burning heat, but three times as hot is the sun scorching the mountains; it breathes out fiery vapours, and its bright rays blind the eyes. Great is the Lord who made it; at his orders it hurries on its course.

The Splendour of the Moon
It is the moon that marks the changing seasons, governing the times, their everlasting sign. From the moon comes the sign for festal days, a light that wanes when it completes its course. The new moon, as its name suggests, renews itself; how marvellous it is in this change, a beacon to the hosts on high, shining in the vault of the heavens!

The Glory of the Stars and the Rainbow
The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven, a glittering array in the heights of the Lord. On the orders of the Holy One they stand in their appointed places; they never relax in their watches. Look at the rainbow, and praise him who made it; it is exceedingly beautiful in its brightness. It encircles the sky with its glorious arc; the hands of the Most High have stretched it out.

The Marvels of Nature
By his command he sends the driving snow and speeds the lightnings of his judgment. Therefore the storehouses are opened, and the clouds fly out like birds. In his majesty he gives the clouds their strength, and the hailstones are broken in pieces. The voice of his thunder rebukes the earth; when he appears, the mountains shake. At his will the south wind blows; so do the storm from the north and the whirlwind. He scatters the snow like birds flying down, and its descent is like locusts alighting. The eye is dazzled by the beauty of its whiteness, and the mind is amazed as it falls. He pours frost over the earth like salt, and icicles form like pointed thorns. The cold north wind blows, and ice freezes on the water; it settles on every pool of water, and the water puts it on like a breastplate. He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilderness, and withers the tender grass like fire. A mist quickly heals all things; the falling dew gives refreshment from the heat.

By his plan he stilled the deep and planted islands in it. Those who sail the sea tell of its dangers, and we marvel at what we hear. In it are strange and marvellous creatures, all kinds of living things, and huge sea-monsters. Because of him each of his messengers succeeds, and by his word all things hold together.
We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: "He is the all."
Where can we find the strength to praise him? For he is greater than all his works.
Awesome is the Lord and very great, and marvellous is his power. Glorify the Lord and exalt him as much
as you can, for he surpasses even that. When you exalt him, summon all your strength, and do not grow
weary, for you cannot praise him enough. Who has seen him and can describe him? Or who can extol
him as he is? Many things greater than these lie hidden, for I do have seen but few of his works. For the
Lord has made all things, and to the godly he has given wisdom.

Sirach 42: 15– 43: 33

The Birth of Jesus Foretold
In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin
engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he
came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his
words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will
name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give
to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom
there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to
her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore
the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her
old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For
nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with
me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1: 26–38

The Shepherds and the Angels
In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an
angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were
terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy
for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This
will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly
there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the
highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

Luke 2: 8–14

The Transfiguration
Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart,
by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no
one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with
Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for
you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud
overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"
Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

Mark 9: 2-8

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath
After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the
Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many
invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When
Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to
be made well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is
stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." Jesus said to him,
"Stand up, take your mat and walk." At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began
to walk. Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the
sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." But he answered them, "The man who made me well
said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take it up

The Resurrection
After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, "You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28

Future Glory
I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8: 18–30

Prayer for the Readers
For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all
the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3: 14–20

The New Heaven and the New Earth
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

Revelation 21: 1-8

Other Scripture References (See Appendix A)
Church Teachings

Documents of Vatican II

2 In His goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man has access to the Father in the Holy Spirit and comes to share in the divine nature. Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself. This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man is made clear to us in Christ who is the Mediator and at the same time the fullness of all revelation.

*Dei Verbum, (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)*

5 If this faith is to be known, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind, and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it." To bring about an ever deeper understanding of revelation, the same Holy Spirit constantly brings faith to completion by His grace.

6 Through divine revelation, God chose to show forth and communicate Himself and the eternal decisions of His will regarding the salvation of men. That is to say, He chose "to share those divine treasures which totally transcend the understanding of the human mind."

This sacred Synod affirms, "God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certainty from created reality by the light of human reason"; but the Synod teaches that it is through His revelation "that those divine realities which are by their nature accessible to human reason can be known by all men with ease, with solid certitude, and with no trace of error, even in the present state of the human race."

*Dei Verbum, (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)*

5 The wonders wrought by God among the people of the Old Testament were but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God. He achieved His task principally by the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension, whereby "dying, he destroyed our death and, rising, he restored our life." For it was from the side of Christ as He slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament which is the whole Church.

*Sacrosanctum Concilium, (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)*

1 By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind, that is, she is a sign and an instrument of such union and unity.

*Lumen Gentium, (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)*

2 By an utterly free and mysterious decree of His own wisdom and goodness, the eternal Father, created the whole world. His plan was to dignify men with a participation in His own divine life.

*Lumen Gentium, (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)*

5 The mystery of the holy Church is manifest in her very foundation, for the Lord Jesus inaugurated her by preaching the good news, that is, the coming of God's Kingdom, which, for centuries, had been promised in the Scriptures: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." In Christ's word, in His works, and in His presence this kingdom reveals itself to men. The word of the Lord is like a seed sown in a field. Those who hear the word with faith and become part of the little flock of Christ have received the kingdom itself. Then, by its own power the seed sprouts and ripens until harvest time.
The miracles of Jesus also confirm that the kingdom has already arrived on earth: “If I cast out devils by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Before all things, however, the kingdom is clearly visible in the very person of Christ, Son of God and Soon of Man, who came “to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Lumen Gentium, (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)

7 In the human nature which He united to Himself, the Son of God redeemed man and transformed him into a new creation by overcoming death through His own death and resurrection. By communicating His Spirit to His brothers, called together from all peoples, Christ made them mystically into His own body.

In that body, the life of Christ is poured into the believers, who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was glorified. Through baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ.

Lumen Gentium, (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)

48 The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus and in which we acquire sanctity through the grace of God, will attain her full perfection only in the glory of heaven. Then will come the time of the restoration of all things. Then the human race as well as the entire world, which is intimately related to man and achieves its purpose through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ.

Lumen Gentium, (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)

10 The truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labors are linked with that more basic imbalance rooted in the heart of man. For in man himself many elements wrestle with one another. Thus, on the one hand, as a creature he experiences his limitations in a multitude of ways. On the other hand, he feels himself to be boundless in his desires and summoned to a higher life. … Nevertheless, in the face of the modern development of the world, an ever-increasing number of people are raising the most basic questions or recognizing them with a new sharpness: what is man? What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continues to exist despite so much progress? What is the purpose of these victories, purchased at so high a cost? What can man offer to society, what can he expect from it? What follows this earthly life?

Gaudium et Spes, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)

10 The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord, who fills the earth. Motivated by this faith, it labors to decipher authentic signs of God’s presence and purpose in the happenings, needs, and desires in which this People has a part along with other men of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God’s design for man’s total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human.

Gaudium et Spes, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)

18 It is in the face of death that the riddle of human existence becomes most acute. … Man rebels against death because he bears in himself an eternal seed which cannot be reduced to sheer matter. All the endeavors of technology, though useful in the extreme, is unable to satisfy that desire for a higher life which is inescapably lodged in his breast. Although the mystery of death utterly beggars the imagination, the Church has been taught by divine revelation, and herself firmly teaches, that man has been created by God for a blissful purpose beyond the reach of earthly misery. … For God has called man and still calls him so that with his entire being he might be joined to Him in an endless sharing of a divine life beyond all corruption. … Faith arouses the hope that they have found true life with God.

Gaudium et Spes, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)

22 The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. … Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.

Gaudium et Spes, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)
39 We do not know the time for the consummation of the earth and of humanity. Nor do we know how all things will be transformed. As deformed by sin, the shape of this world will pass away. But we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth where justice will abide, and whose blessedness will answer and surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart.

_Gaudium et Spes, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)_

59 Therefore the human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense. ...This sacred Synod, therefore, recalling the teaching of the first Vatican Council, declares that there are “two orders of knowledge” which are distinct, namely faith and reason. It declares that the Church does not indeed forbid that “when the human arts and sciences are practiced they use their own principles and their proper method, each in its own domain.” Hence, “acknowledging this just liberty,” this sacred Synod affirms the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences.

_Gaudium et Spes, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)_

1 Men look to the various religions for answers to those profound mysteries of the human condition which, today even as in olden times, deeply stir the human heart: What is a man? What is the meaning and the purpose of our life? What is goodness and what is sin? What gives rise to our sorrows and to what intent? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgment, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our being, and whence we take our rise, and whither our journey leads us?

_Nostra Aetate, (Declaration of the Church to Non-Christian Religions)_
Catechism of the Catholic Church

1 God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life.

27 The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for …

28 In many ways, throughout history down to the present day, men have given expression to their quest for God in their religious beliefs and behaviour: in their prayers, sacrifices, rituals, meditations, and so forth. These forms of religious expression, despite the ambiguities they often bring with them, are so universal that one may well call man a religious being …

35 Man's faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith. The proofs of God's existence, however, can predispose one to faith and help one to see that faith is not opposed to reason.

36 "Our holy mother, the Church, holds and teaches that God, the first principle and last end of all things, can be known with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason." Without this capacity, man would not be able to welcome God's revelation. Man has this capacity because he is created "in the image of God."

37 In the historical conditions in which he finds himself, however, man experiences many difficulties in coming to know God by the light of reason alone …

38 This is why man stands in need of being enlightened by God's revelation, not only about those things that exceed his understanding, but also "about those religious and moral truths which of themselves are not beyond the grasp of human reason, so that even in the present condition of the human race, they can be known by all men with ease, with firm certainty and with no admixture of error."

42 God transcends all creatures. We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image-bound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God – "the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable" – with our human representations. Our human words always fail short of the mystery of God.

50 By natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works. But there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation. Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

208 Faced with God's fascinating and mysterious presence, man discovers his own insignificance. Before the burning bush, Moses takes off his sandals and veils his face in the presence of God's holiness. …

213 The revelation of the ineffable name "I Am Who I Am" contains then the truth that God alone IS. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and following it the Church's Tradition, understood the divine name in this sense: God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and
without end. All creatures receive all that they are and have from him; but he alone is his very being, and he is of himself everything that he is.

234 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the “hierarchy of the truths of faith.” The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men “and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin.”

237 The Trinity is a mystery of faith in the strict sense, one of the “mysteries that are hidden in God, which can never be known unless they are revealed by God.” To be sure, God has left traces of his Trinitarian being in his work of creation and in his Revelation throughout the Old Testament. But his inmost Being as Holy Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel’s faith before the Incarnation of God’s Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

272 Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. …

273 Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God’s almighty power. This faith glories in its weakness in order to draw itself to Christ’s power. The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith. …

314 We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history. But the ways of his providence are often unknown to us. Only at the end, when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God “face to face,” will we fully know the ways by which – even through the dramas of evil and sin – God has guided his creation to that definitive Sabbath rest for which he created heaven and earth.

341 The beauty of the universe: The order and harmony of the created world results from the diversity of beings and from the relationships which exist among them. Man discovers them progressively as the laws of nature. They call forth the admiration of scholars. The beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator and ought to inspire the respect and submission of man’s intellect and will.

770 The Church is in history, but at the same time she transcends it. It is only “with the eyes of faith” that one can see her visible reality and at the same time in her spiritual reality as bearer of divine life.

774 The Greek word mysterion was translated into Latin by two terms: mysterium and sacramentum. In later usage the term sacramentum emphasizes the visible sign of the hidden reality of salvation which was indicated by the term mysterium. In this sense, Christ himself is the mystery of salvation: “For there is no other mystery of God, except Christ.” The saving work of his holy and sanctifying humanity is the sacrament of salvation, which is revealed and active in the Church’s sacraments (which the Eastern Churches also call “the mysteries”). The seven sacraments are the signs and instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ the head throughout the Church which is his Body. The Church, then, both contains and communicates the invisible grace she signifies. It is in this analogical sense, that the Church is called a “sacrament”.

1067 … the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.

1068 It is this mystery of Christ that the Church proclaims and celebrates in her liturgy so that the faithful may live from it and bear witness to it in the world. …

1113 The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments.
The mystery of Christ is so unfathomably rich that it cannot be exhausted by its expression in any single liturgical tradition.

Among all the words of Revelation, there is one which is unique: the revealed name of God. God confides his name to those who believe in him; he reveals himself to them in his personal mystery. The gift of a name belongs to the order of trust and intimacy. …

Respect for his name is an expression of the respect owed to the mystery of God himself and to the whole sacred reality it evokes. The sense of the sacred is part of the virtue of religion: Are these feelings of fear and awe Christian feelings or not? … I say this, the, which I think no one can reasonably dispute. They are the class of feelings we should have – yes, have to an intense degree – if we literally had the sight of Almighty God; therefore they are the class of feelings which we shall have, if we realize his presence. In proportion as we believe that He is present, we shall have them; and not to have them, is not to realize, not to believe that He is present.

Man is in search of God. In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. … All religions bear witness to men's essential search for God.

God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly call each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation.

Here again the initiative is God's. From the midst of the burning bush he calls Moses. This event will remain one of the primordial images of prayer in the spiritual tradition of Jews and Christians alike. When “the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob” calls Moses to be his servant, it is because he is the living God who wants men to live. God reveals himself in order to save them, though he does not do this alone or despite them: he calls Moses to be his messenger, an associate in his compassion, his work of salvation. There is something of a divine plea in this mission, and only after long debate does Moses attune his own will to that of the Saviour God. But in the dialogue in which God confides in him, Moses also learns how to pray: he balks, makes excuses, above all questions: and it is in response to his question that the Lord confides his ineffable name, which will be revealed through his mighty deeds.
Because we have been sent into the world as a “people for life,” our proclamation must also become a genuine celebration of the Gospel of life. This celebration, with the evocative power of its gestures, symbols and rites, should become a precious and significant setting in which the beauty and grandeur of this Gospel is handed on. For this to happen, we need first of all to foster in ourselves and in others a contemplative outlook. Such an outlook arises from faith in the God of life, who has created every individual as a “wonder” (cf. Ps. 139:14). It is the outlook of those who see life in its deeper meaning, who grasps its utter gratuitousness, its beauty and its invitation to freedom and responsibility. It is the outlook of those who do not presume to take possession of reality, but instead accept it as a gift, discovering in all things the reflection of the Creator and seeing in every person his living image (cf. Gn. 1: 27; Ps. 8: 5). This outlook does not give in to discouragement when confronted by those who are sick, suffering, outcast or at death’s door. Instead, in all these situations it feels challenged to find meaning, and precisely in these circumstances it is open to perceiving in the face of every person a call to encounter, dialogue and solidarity. It is time for all of us to adopt this outlook and with deep religious awe to rediscover the ability to revere and honour every person, as Paul VI invited us to do in one of his first Christmas messages. Inspired by this contemplative outlook, the new people of the redeemed cannot but respond with songs of joy, praise and thanksgiving for the priceless gift of life, so the mystery of every individual’s call to share through Christ in the life of grace and in an existence of unending communion with God our Creator and Father.

…Like the Psalmist, we too in our daily prayer as individuals and as a community praise and bless God our Father, who knitted us together in our mother’s womb, and saw and loved us while we were still without form (cf. Ps. 139: 13, 15-16). We exclaim with overwhelming joy: “I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made; wonderful are your works. You know me through and through”’ (Ps. 139: 14). Indeed, “despite its hardships, its hidden mysteries, its suffering and its inevitable frailty, this mortal life is a most beautiful thing, a marvel ever new and moving, an event worthy of being exalted in joy and glory.” … We are called to express wonder and gratitude for the gift of life and to welcome, savor and share the Gospel of life not only in our personal and community prayer, but above all in the celebrations of the liturgical year.


The poetic style of the Genesis story conveys well the awe which people feel before the immensity of creation and the resulting sense of adoration of the one who brought all things into being from nothing. It is a story of intense religious significance, a hymn to the Creator of the universe, pointing to him as the only Lord in the face of recurring temptations to divinize the world itself. At the same time, it is a hymn to the goodness of creation, all fashioned by the mighty and merciful hand of God. …

Coming as it does from the hand of God, the cosmos bears the imprint of his goodness. It is a beautiful world, rightly moving us to admiration and delight, but also calling for cultivation and development. … (t)he Bible not only gives us a glimpse of the mysterious relationship between the Creator and the created world, but also casts light upon the task of human beings in relation to the cosmos. The “work” of God is in some ways an example for man, called not only to inhabit the cosmos, but also to “build” it and thus become God’s “co-worker.” … The exhilarating advance of science, technology and culture in their various forms – an ever more rapid and today even overwhelming development – is the historical consequence of the mission by which God entrusts to man and woman the task and responsibility of filling the earth and subduing it by means of their work in the observance of God’s law.

Dies Domini, (On Keeping the Lord’s Day ), Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II, 1998

It should nonetheless be kept in mind that revelation remains charged with mystery. It is true that Jesus, with his entire life revealed the countenance of the Father, for he came to teach the secret things of God. But our vision of the face of God is always fragmentary and impaired by the limits of our understanding. Faith alone makes it possible to penetrate the mystery in a way that allows us to understand it coherently.
13 From the teaching of the two Vatican councils there also emerges a genuinely novel consideration for philosophical learning. Revelation has set within history a point of reference which cannot be ignored if the mystery of human life is to be known. Yet this knowledge refers back constantly to the mystery of God, which the human mind cannot exhaust but can only receive and embrace in faith. Between these two poles, reason has its own specific field in which it can inquire and understand, restricted only by its finiteness before the infinite mystery of God.

Revelation therefore introduces into our history a universal and ultimate truth, which stirs the human mind to ceaseless effort; indeed, it impels reason continually to extend the range of its knowledge until it senses that it has done all in its power, leaving no stone unturned. …

16 … Faith sharpens the inner eye, opening the mind to discover in the flux of events the working of providence. …

17 There is thus no reason for competition of any kind between reason and faith: Each contains the other, and each has its own scope for action. …

Canadian/Ontario Documents

When we dwell in the mystery of the beginning of the day, when we do not take it for granted, we are filled with gratitude for the gift of life. When we begin the day in gratitude, we are filled with wonder, joy and a sense of trust in what has been given, in what is beyond our control. As on the first day of creation, we reflect on the mystery of the beginning of each day, the beginning of each life, and see that it is very good. It is this sense of the goodness of life and creation that we as Christians hold dear. Our faith is rooted in a sense of gratitude because the most important realities are those which we could never manufacture or produce on our own: life, love, faith and hope. We do not bring ourselves to birth, we cannot make others love us, we cannot manufacture faith and hope in our lives. Nor do we want to.

*Awakening to Life – A Meditation, Catholic Group for Health, Justice and Life (Members include Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops), 1999*

Spiritual dialogue is, finally, more than knowledge and discussion. The end of the spiritual journey is beyond the limits of human understanding, and even beyond that broadened understanding which results from sharing all we know. The point of arrival for every spiritual quest is to share in the holiness of God.

*Rediscovering, Recognizing and Celebrating the Spiritual Heritage of Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples – A Pastoral Message to the native Peoples of Canada, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1999*

LAST YEAR, in our Easter message, we spoke of the necessity of choosing life in a society where too often human dignity is not respected and vulnerable human life is endangered. Today, on the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology, we are issuing a call to celebrate life by caring for God's creation and responding to the ecological crisis that is manifesting itself all around us in so many ways.

Every day in the media we hear about new ecological problems. Climate change from global warming and the depletion of the ozone layer are changing the conditions for life over the whole planet.

In Canada, fish stocks on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts are endangered, presenting both an ecological and an economic crisis. In Alberta, we are having to face the environmental costs of many years of large-scale logging often without adequate reforestation, inadequately planned resource development, industrial expansion and toxic waste disposal, and non-sustainable agricultural practices. The loss of parks, wilderness areas and other wildlife habitats poses an increasing threat to endangered species and brings about the loss of biodiversity.

Pope John Paul II, in his 1990 statement Peace with All Creation, reminds us that present practices cannot continue and that fundamental change is required: "Faced with the widespread destruction of the environment, people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to use the goods of the earth as we have in the past."

Hopeful initiatives are already emerging ranging from global treaties to eliminate ozone destroying chemicals to neighbourhood recycling organizations. Much more needs to be done, however, if future generations of our children and grandchildren are not to be saddled with a life-threatening environmental deficit.

Ecological crisis impacts on life, including human life. For Christians and all human beings, this must be a priority concern. The Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms that the seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation (no. 2415). Pope John Paul II repeatedly emphasizes that ecological crisis must be seen as a spiritual and moral issue.

In order to understand and respond to this great challenge, we need to reexamine our fundamental values. As Christians, we need to step back and reflect on our place in the midst of all that God has created in such abundance and beauty.
Biblical Ecological Vision
Genesis contains a clear and repeated message that creation, sun and stars, land and seas, animals and plants, is good in God's eyes. All creation is called to give praise to God (Daniel 3:35-68). Humans, very much part of God's creation, are created male and female in the image and likeness of God and have a special role and responsibility within creation. Humans are called to exercise dominion over the earth, a dominion of service, wisdom and love.

The biblical jubilee contains what we call today an eco-justice message, bringing together a call for social justice among all peoples and right relationship with the land and all creation.


Part of human sin has been to see ourselves as separate from the rest of creation, seeing the natural world only as a source of profit and personal gain. To overcome this sin, we need to affirm our place within the dynamic web of creation which supports and sustains all life.

We can learn much from the spiritual traditions of our aboriginal brothers and sisters which celebrate our kinship with the rest of creation and seek to strengthen the sacred circle of all creation.

Learning from Catholic Social Teaching
Catholics see creation in a sacramental way. The abundance and beauty of God's creation reveals to us something of the generosity of the Creator. God is present and speaks in the dynamic life forces of our universe and planet as well as in our own lives. Respect for life needs to include all creation.

Catholic spirituality and sacramental practice are rooted in the belief that basic materials such as water, grain made into bread and grapes made into wine can communicate and convey God's saving action into our midst.

Ecological destruction and the loss of biodiversity obscure our ability to see and experience God and are an affront to the Creator. The fate of the natural world and human life are fully intertwined. Ecological destruction harms human life, and human social injustice inevitably has ecological consequences.

A New Beginning
Scientists are telling us that in the face of rising global population and increased energy and natural resource consumption, we have a limited window of opportunity to change our environmentally destructive ways of relating to the earth. Failure to act in a timely and decisive manner will threaten the ability of the earth to nurture and sustain life as we know it. This time of jubilee preparation is a call for A New Beginning. The eco-justice message of the biblical jubilee is a challenge for us to embrace a right relationship with God, all human beings and all creation. This jubilee call is a call for us here and now to celebrate life, to care for creation.

Alberta Bishops' Statement on the Care of God's Creation, October 4, 1998

The Principle of Sacramentality: A People Who See God in All Things
All the world is suffused with the mystery of God. Therefore, all the world is also capable of revealing the mystery of God. Every search for meaning, truth, clarity and depth is in its own way a part of the human yearning that the mystery of God should communicate itself to us. The God immersed in mystery awakens our hope for encounter. There is a dreadful attitude in us at times that would use the Mystery as an excuse to quit the search. We say: “Oh well, it is a Mystery”, and then feel we have justified our unwillingness to seek further or our resignation in the face of the daunting task. However, Mystery is not an excuse to fall back on when life is confusing and irritatingly vague. When we encounter Mystery, we find the birthplace of curiosity and wonder. Yet, if any of these experiences of encountering mystery are to touch the lives of men and women whose existence is wrapped in the tangible, historical and visible world, then the principle of sacramentality is required.
The principle of sacramentality is the fundamental conviction that the visible, tangible and historical material of the world around us is capable of revealing the intangible, invisible, and immaterial presence of God. In Catholic Education, we are committed to this search for the mystery of God that can be found revealed in all the world of God’s creation. The principle of sacramentality serves the purpose of helping human beings in their exploration of the mystery of God. Catholic Education aims to move a new generation to a renewed exploration of the Holy and Mysterious God. Our schools desire to lead children to God, but it is to a God who is surprise, who is delightfully unpredictable in grace and presence, astonishingly creative and of a fascinating tenderness. We are guided to a meeting with a God beyond wildest fantasy, but not beyond imagination. (pp. 1-2)

Quotations

As I make my slow pilgrimage through the world, a certain sense of beautiful mystery seems to gather and grow.

A. C. Benson, From a College Window

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious.

Albert Einstein

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.

Carl Sagan

Our ancestors worshipped the Sun, and they were not that foolish. It makes sense to revere the Sun and the stars, for we are their children.

Carl Sagan

Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.

Albert Einstein

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.

Albert Einstein

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

Albert Einstein

Human subtlety will never devise an invention more beautiful, more simple or more direct than does Nature, because in her inventions, nothing is lacking and nothing is superfluous.

Leonardo DaVinci

If we had a keen vision of all that is ordinary in human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow or the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which is the other side of silence.

Marion Evans Cross

I am taught the poorness of our invention, the ugliness of towns and palaces. Art and luxury have early learned that they must work as enhancement and sequel to this original beauty. I am over instructed for my return. Henceforth I shall be hard to please. I cannot go back to toys. I am grown expensive and sophisticated. I can no longer live without elegance: but a countryman shall be my master of revels. He who knows the most, he who knows what sweets and virtues are in the ground, the waters, the plants, the heavens, and how to come at these enchantments, is the rich and royal man. Only as far as the masters of the world have called in nature to their aid, can they reach the height of magnificence.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Wisdom begins in wonder.

Socrates

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

As knowledge increases, wonder deepens.

Charles Morgan
The world will never starve for want of wonders, but for want of wonder.  

Gilbert K. Chesterton

It was through the feeling of wonder that men now and at first began to philosophize.  

Aristotle

Men love to wonder and that is the seed of our science.  

Ralph Waldo Emerson

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.  

William Cowper

Wonder is the basis of worship.  

Thomas Carlyle

He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.  

Albert Einstein
Web Resources

There are a variety of sites on the world wide web that contain material related to “mystery, wonder and awe”. Most seem to constitute affirmations of the appropriateness of such experiences in the development of a healthy, personal spirituality. As such, reading about someone else’s experience or even understanding of “wonder” is hardly a substitute for creating opportunities wherein such experiences themselves may be made possible. That said, the following sites could be divided into four categories:

- Sites offering images of beauty, be they from nature or from the hand of artists, that in and of themselves could evoke a sense of wonder
- Sites offering prayer and liturgical resources and experiences
- Sites related to care of the earth (see also Theme: Stewardship for Creation)
- Sites related to mysticism

Images of Wonder

Hubble Space Telescope
http://hubble.nasa.gov/
Imagery from the Hubble Space Telescope is available here. Peering deep into the hidden corners of the universe, one can not only see through space but also through time since the light from these distances has taken millions of years to reach earth. More images available at http://www.stsci.edu/resources/
School friendly site at http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/hst/index.html

Powers of Ten
“Powers of ten” allows to students to move from the outer edges of the galaxy to the inner workings of atoms, magnifications changing in powers of ten. There is a control mechanism below the image that allows for moving up and down in the scaled.

NASA
http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/
Links to wonderful space imagery of earth, solar system and stars and galaxies.

Virtual Museums
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/English/index_flash.html
This is the gateway to a rich variety of Canadian museums of art, science, nature, history, transportation and industry. The image gallery at http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/English/Gallery/index.html provides links to some excellent collections. Museums can also be search locally by province.

Louvre
http://www.smartweb.fr/louvre/
Considered by many to be one of the great museums of the world, the Louvre Museum site, Paris, contains images of their extensive collection.

Metropolitan Museum
http://www.metmuseum.org/home.asp
In formation since 1870, the Metropolitan Museum's collection now contains more than three million works of art from all points of the compass, ancient through modern times. About 3,500 objects—fifty highlights from each of the Museum's curatorial departments as well as the entire department of European Paintings—can be searched by artist, period, style, or keyword.
Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools: Enhancing the Religious Dimension of Catholic Education

Museum Directory
http://vlmp.museophile.com/
An extensive directory of on-line museums provides links to museums from around the world.

National Geographic Society
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/index.html
The home page for the wonderful images and information we have come to expect from National Geographic.

Photo Library
http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/collections.html
This site features rich and amazing photographs of the ocean, atmosphere and space.

Royal Ontario Museum
http://www.rom.on.ca/
The web site of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto features everything from dinosaurs, to rocks to tapestries.

McMichael Gallery
http://www.mcmichael.com/
Specializing in the art of the Group of Seven as well as native aboriginal artists, this site is well worth visiting.

Virtual Parks
http://www.virtualparks.org/main.html
See virtual reality panoramic views of over 2,300 wilderness locations around the Western US & Canada... from ghost towns to lighthouses, from fields of wildflowers bursting with life, to the eerie tufa towers of California’s Mono Lake. Explore the John Muir Trail in the High Sierras, the rugged beauty of the Canadian Rockies, or the slickrock canyons of Utah. Requires free Quicktime player. High speed cable a real advantage for browsing this site.

Parks Canada
http://parkscanada.pch.gc.ca/np/index_e.asp
Some of the most wonderful sites in Canada are in our National Parks. This is the gateway for all national parks. The virtual tour of Jasper National Park can be viewed at http://www.worldweb.com/parkscanada-jasper/index.html

Astronomy – Picture of the Day
http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/
This site offers not only an amazing "picture of the day" of space, but features an extensive archive. Great source of images for your presentations on creation in general, or science lessons about the universe, in particular.

Prayer and Liturgy

Passionist Community Prayer Resources
http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/index.html
Comprehensive prayer resources from the Passionist community.

Sacred Space Home Page
http://www.sacredspace.ie/
The Sacred Space online prayer page is hosted by the Irish Jesuits. It provides a variety of resources for prayer, ranging from online retreats, seasonal reflections and daily scripture meditations.
Minute Meditations – St. Anthony’s Messenger Press
http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Minute/default.asp
As the name would indicate, you are invited to take a brief moment from the business of your day to pray. Useful resource for creating your own prayer services as well.

Pray With The Heart
http://prayers.pray-with-the-heart.org/
This site offers a rich collection of individual prayers, litanies, novenas and much more.

Universalis – Prayer Site
http://www.universalis.com/20040324/sitemap.htm
This site provides information related to the daily Liturgy of the Hours. It provides accurate information with regard to the prescribed readings for any given day.

Domestic Church – Prayers for Children
http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19980301/SCRMNTL/CHILDPRAY.HTM
While this is not an extensive collection of prayers written by and for use with children, it does contain some creative pieces that evoke the innocence and simplicity of children.

Catholic Prayers
This is an extensive resource both of traditional prayers and reflections as well as others inspired by contemporary events.

Daily Prayer Online
This Australian site offers both a variety of resources for prayer as well as some interesting, interactive experiences of prayer. There is a separate section on prayer in the classroom organized by grade level.

World Prayers
http://www.worldprayers.org/
The purpose of this website is to gather many of the great prayers rooted in the religious traditions of our planet into an online database representing all life affirming traditions. Many of these prayers have been used for hundreds if not thousands of years. Others are from spiritual contemporaries in today's intricate global fabric. Though these sacred verses arise from divergent paths, voices, languages, cultures and heritages, they all carry within them the same burning flame - the same impassioned love for life and the divine mysteries.

St. Joseph Software – Prayer Site
http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/index.htm
This site features resources, both traditional and contemporary, rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Community of Prayer
http://www.usfca.edu/ICEL/quest.htm
This is another rich site featuring a wide range of traditional and contemporary prayers useful for personal and/or liturgical use.

The Interview With God
http://www.theinterviewwithgod.com/
This interesting, on-line prayer experience invites you to take time to consider the place of God in your life.

Taizé Community Site
http://www.talize.fr/
This official site of the Taizé community features a wide variety of resources for prayer and worship, including on-line versions of some of their most famous musical chants.
Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools: Enhancing the Religious Dimension of Catholic Education

Liturgy Help
LiturgyHelp.com is a comprehensive range of Lectionary based liturgical and catechetical resources designed to assist the key ministries in the parish to better prepare for liturgy and catechetics, integrating liturgy into their diverse ministries. LiturgyHelp provides very cost effective resources to individual ministers or a complete suite of web services to parish communities and ministry teams.

Liturgical Studies and Liturgical Music
http://www.users.csbsju.edu/~eknuth/itr/ltgy/
Hosted by the College of St. Benedict at St. John’s University (New York), this site offers links to many of the foundational Church documents on liturgy and worship. For anyone interested in doing serious research into the nature of liturgy, this site is an invaluable resource.

Worship Office – Archdiocese of Newark
http://www.rcan.org/worship/
This rich site offers a variety of practical resources for prayer and liturgy. It’s use of the Liturgical Calendar to organize information will be particularly helpful for those looking for seasonal prayer and liturgical materials.

Anno Domini – Jesus Through the Centuries In Art
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Annodomini/index.html
For anyone looking for images of Jesus, this site is a goldmine.

It’s Catholic
http://www.disciplesnow.com/catholic/
Disciples Now is a web-based ministry for youth focused on the traditions, life, and mission of the Catholic faith community. As a informational resource, Disciples Now provides opportunities to learn, to discuss, and to celebrate the challenges of discipleship in the context of daily life.

Resources for Catholic Educators
http://www.silk.net/RelEd/
Resources for Catholic Educators is a web site offering you links, lesson plans, clip art, colouring pages, crossword puzzles, a newsletter for Catholic catechists, teachers, Directors of Religious Education, parents and all involved in the education of the faith.

Catholic Education Resources
http://www.cloudnet.com/~edrbsass/edthe.htm
This page contains resources and lesson plans for world religions and religious education. It includes many links to sites of particular interest to Catholic educators.

Oremus Bible Browswer
http://bible.oremus.org
The Oremus Bible Browser provides a simple interface to the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. A powerful search engine allows the user to track down biblical passages. In addition, the Authorized Version (or King James Version), and several other versions of the psalms are available. This is a useful resource both for research and liturgical planning.

Bible Gateway
http://bible.gospelcom.net/
BibleGateway.com is a free service for reading and researching scripture online— all in the language or translation of your choice! It provides advanced searching capabilities based on keywords or scripture references, and various tools to enhance your study of the Bible.
Care of the Earth

Forum on Religion and Ecology
http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion/
This site offers a rich variety of the perspectives of the major world religious traditions on the present ecological crisis.

Earth Day Network
http://www.earthday.net/
Founded by the organizers of the first Earth Day in 1970, Earth Day Network (EDN) promotes environmental citizenship and year round progressive action worldwide. Its mission is to build broad-based citizen support for sound, workable and effective environmental and sustainable development policies for all. Their web site offers an impressive collection of programs, activities, and resources, many of which are directed to the classroom from K-12.

The Earth Charter Initiative
http://www.earthcharter.org/
The Earth Charter is an authoritative synthesis of values, principles, and aspirations that are widely shared by growing numbers of men and women in all regions of the world. The principles of the Earth Charter reflect extensive international consultations conducted over a period of many years. These principles are also based upon contemporary science, international law, and the insights of philosophy and religion. The Earth Charter Youth Initiative (ECYI) is led by a core group of young people from different countries committed to the Earth Charter and active in bringing it to a larger number of young people worldwide.

Mysticism

Christian Mysticism
http://www.innerexplorations.com/chmysttext/christia.htm
This site invites you to consider the relationship between the mysticism of John of the Cross and modern attempts to renew the contemplative life like centering prayer, Christian meditation and the Catholic charismatic movement.

Christian Mystics
http://www.christianmystics.com/
The tradition within Christianity of the Christian mystic is a very strong tradition, in spite of what some fundamentalists might assume. On this site, you can review the ideas and writings of traditional Christian mystics as well as discover some new, contemporary voices.

Christian Mysticism
http://www.chmysticaloutreach.com/pages/1/index.htm
This site contains the lessons in contemplative prayer and Christian mysticism about our guide to this one reality that Jesus left to his followers two thousand years ago; the Holy Spirit. It can be heard, seen and felt within all of good heart and once open to it will guide and direct our lives to the reality that is God. This site includes some practical tips for prayer.

Inner Explorations
http://www.innerexplorations.com/
This site is self-described as a place where Christian mysticism, theology and metaphysics meet Eastern religions, Jungian psychology and a new sense of the earth. It features more than 500 web pages, 2,500 pages of text, and 1,000 images.
Catholic Encyclopaedia (1917) – Mysticism
http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10663b.htm
This page offers an academic overview of mysticism as featured in the classic, 1917 version of the Catholic Encyclopaedia.

Christian Mysticism Websites
http://www.praize.com/engine/Prayer/Mysticism/
This page provides links to a variety of sites on mysticism.

Introduction to Christian Mystics – Mystics In Love
http://www.gloriana.nu/mystic.html
This site offers a basic overview of Christian Spirituality, an introduction to several mediaeval mystics and their writings, and links to related pages.

CARFLEO
http://www.ycdsb.edu.on.ca/schools/crec/
Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario provides a variety of curriculum resources for Catholic teachers on its own site as well as providing useful links to others. Included are liturgical resources.
Links to Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation

The graduate is expected to be:

**A discerning believer formed in the Catholic faith community who:**

CGE1a Illustrates a basic understanding of the saving story of our Christian faith

CGE1b Participates in the sacramental life of the church and demonstrates an understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist to our Catholic story

CGE1c Actively reflects on God's Word as communicated through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures

CGE1e Speaks the language of life... "recognizing that life is an unearned gift and that a person entrusted with life does not own it but that one is called to protect and cherish it." (Witnesses to Faith)

CGE1f Seeks intimacy with God and celebrates communion with God, others and creation through prayer and worship

CGE1g Understands that one's purpose or call in life comes from God and strives to discern and live out this call throughout life's journey

CGE1h Respects the faith traditions, world religions and the life-journeys of all people of good will

CGE1i Integrates faith with life

*CGE (Overall) A reflective, creative and holistic thinker who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.*

**A reflective and creative thinker who:**

CGE3a Recognizes there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges

CGE3b Creates, adapts, evaluates new ideas in light of the common good

CGE3c Thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems

CGE3e Adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience

*CGE (Overall) A self-directed, responsible who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.*

**A self-directed, responsible, life long learner who:**

CGE4a Demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others

CGE4b Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability

*CGE (Overall) A responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.*

**A responsible citizen who:**

CGE7d Promotes the sacredness of life.

CGE7f Respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures
Reflection Questions

Personal and Group Reflections

Personal Reflection:
1. I describe a time when I have had an experience of mystery, wonder and awe ...

2. This experience has impacted on my sense of vocation as a Catholic teacher ...

Small Group Reflection:
1. In our experience, how has any shared individual or collective experience of mystery, wonder and awe reinforced our sense of our school's Catholic identity?

2. In what ways may these experiences have impacted on the curricula and/or the manner in which I present it in the classroom?

Strategies
1. How could we create opportunities within the life of our school community that would allow staff and students to enter more fully into the mystery, wonder and awe of God?

2. What opportunities already exist in the curriculum and the life of the school which allows staff and students to consider more deeply the mystery of God?
Appendix A

Another Account of the Creation
In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up--for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground-- then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."
Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

The First Sin and Its Punishment
Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbirth; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you..."
shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them. Then the Lord God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"--therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

**Genesis 2–3**

**God’s Covenant with Abram (Abraham)**

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. Then he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgasites, and the Jebusites."

**Genesis 15**

**The Ten Plagues**

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole country with frogs. The river shall swarm with frogs; they shall come up into your palace, into your bedchamber and your bed, and into the houses of your officials and of your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your officials.'" And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, the canals, and the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'" So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. But the magicians did the same by their secret arts, and brought frogs up on the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Pray to the Lord to take away the frogs from me and my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." Moses said to Pharaoh, "Kindly tell me when I am to pray for you and for your officials and for your people, that the frogs may be removed from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile." And he said, "Tomorrow." Moses said, "As you say! So that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God, the frogs shall leave you and your houses and your officials and your people; they shall be left only in the Nile." Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh; and Moses cried out to the Lord concerning the frogs that he had brought upon Pharaoh. And the Lord did as Moses requested: the frogs died in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart, and would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and
therefore, and have your livestock and everything that you have in the open field brought to a secure place; every human or animal that is in the open field and is not brought under shelter will die when the hail comes down upon them." Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried their slaves and livestock off to a secure place. Those who did not regard the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the open field. The Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven so that hail may fall on the whole land of Egypt, on humans and animals and all the plants of the field in the land of Egypt." Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire...
came down on the earth. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt; there was hail with fire flashing continually in the midst of it, such heavy hail as had never fallen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck down everything that was in the open field throughout all the land of Egypt, both human and animal; the hail also struck down all the plants of the field, and shattered every tree in the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was no hail. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Pray to the Lord! Enough of God's thunder and hail! I will let you go; you need stay no longer." Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. But as for you and your officials, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God." (Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they are late in coming up.) So Moses left Pharaoh, went out of the city, and stretched out his hands to the Lord; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured down on the earth. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned once more and hardened his heart, he and his officials. So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his officials, in order that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I have made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them--so that you may know that I am the Lord." So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me. For if you refuse to let my people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country. They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They shall devour the last remnant left you after the hail, and they shall devour every tree of yours that grows in the field. They shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your officials and of all the Egyptians--something that neither your parents nor your grandparents have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.'"

Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. Pharaoh's officials said to him, "How long shall this fellow be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the Lord their God; do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?" So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, worship the Lord your God! But which ones are to go?" Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, because we have the Lord's festival to celebrate." He said to them, "The Lord indeed will be with you, if ever I let your little ones go with you! Plainly, you have some evil purpose in mind. No, never! Your men may go and worship the Lord, for that is what you are asking." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt, so that the locusts may come upon it and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left." So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; when morning came, the east wind had brought the locusts. The locusts came upon all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever shall be again. They covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was black; and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left; nothing green was left, no tree, no plant in the field, in all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh hurriedly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Do forgive my sin just this once, and pray to the Lord your God that at the least he remove this deadly thing from me." So he went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. The Lord changed the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was dense darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. People could not see one another, and for three days they could not move from where they were; but all the Israelites had light where they lived. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses, and said, "Go, worship the Lord. Only your flocks and your herds shall remain behind. Even your children may go with you." But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings to sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must choose some of them for the worship of the Lord our God, and we will not know what to use to worship the Lord until we arrive there."
But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was unwilling to let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take care that you do not see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die." Moses said, "Just as you say! I will never see your face again."

The Lord said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go from here; indeed, when he lets you go, he will drive you away. Tell the people that every man is to ask his neighbour and every woman is to ask her neighbour for objects of silver and gold." The Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, Moses himself was a man of great importance in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's officials and in the sight of the people. Moses said, "Thus says the Lord: About midnight I will go out through Egypt. Every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the female slave who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the livestock. Then there will be a loud cry throughout the whole land of Egypt, such as has never been or will ever be again. But not a dog shall growl at any of the Israelites--not at people, not at animals--so that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. Then all these officials of yours shall come down to me, and bow low to me, saying, 'Leave us, you and all the people who follow you.' After that I will leave." And in hot anger he left Pharaoh. The Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, in order that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. "Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a solemn assembly, and on the seventh day a solemn assembly; no work shall be done on those days; only what everyone must eat, that alone may be prepared by you. You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the
houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses." And the people bowed down and worshiped. The Israelites went and did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians; and there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. Then he summoned Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, "Rise up, go away from my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, worship the Lord, as you said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you said, and be gone. And bring a blessing on me too!" The Egyptians urged the people to hasten their departure from the land, for they said, "We shall all be dead." So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls wrapped up in their cloaks on their shoulders. The Israelites had done as Moses told them; they had asked the Egyptians for jewellery of silver and gold, and for clothing, and the Lord had given the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And so they plundered the Egyptians. The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed crowd also went up with them, and livestock in great numbers, both flocks and herds. They baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt; it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves. The time that the Israelites had lived in Egypt was four hundred thirty years. At the end of four hundred thirty years, on that very day, all the companies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. That was for the Lord a night of vigil, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. That same night is a vigil to be kept for the Lord by all the Israelites throughout their generations. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: This is the ordinance for the passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but any slave who has been purchased may eat of it after he has been circumcised; no bound or hired servant may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the animal outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. The whole congregation of Israel shall celebrate it. If an alien who resides with you wants to celebrate the passover to the Lord, all his males shall be circumcised; then he may draw near to celebrate it; he shall be regarded as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it; there shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you. All the Israelites did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. That very day the Lord brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, company by company.

The Greatness and Goodness of God

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.
Praise befits the upright. Praise the Lord with the lyre;
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings.
Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.
For the word of the Lord is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.
By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle;
he put the deeps in storehouses.
Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.
The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage.
The Lord looks down from heaven;

Exodus 8-12
he sees all humankind. 
From where he sits enthroned 
he watches all the inhabitants of the earth--
he who fashions the hearts of them all, 
and observes all their deeds. 
A king is not saved by his great army; 
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. 
The war horse is a vain hope for victory, 
and by its great might it cannot save. 
Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, 
on those who hope in his steadfast love, 
to deliver their soul from death, 
and to keep them alive in famine. 
Our soul waits for the Lord; 
he is our help and shield. 
Our heart is glad in him, 
because we trust in his holy name. 
Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you. 

Psalm 33

Israel's God – Judge of All the Earth 
In Judah God is known, 
his name is great in Israel. 
His abode has been established in Salem, 
his dwelling place in Zion. 
There he broke the flashing arrows, 
the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war. 
Glorious are you, 
more majestic than the everlasting mountains. 
The stouthearted were stripped of their spoil; 
they sank into sleep; 
none of the troops was able to lift a hand. 
At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both rider and horse lay stunned. 
But you indeed are awesome! 
Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused? 
From the heavens you uttered judgment; 
the earth feared and was still when God rose up to establish judgment, 
to save all the oppressed of the earth. 
Human wrath serves only to praise you, 
when you bind the last bit of your wrath around you. 
Make vows to the Lord your God, and perform them; 
let all who are around him bring gifts to the one who is awesome, 
who cuts off the spirit of princes, 
who inspires fear in the kings of the earth. 

Psalm 76

The Glory of God's Reign 
The Lord is king! 
Let the earth rejoice; 
let the many coastlands be glad! 
Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; 
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. 
Fire goes before him, and consumes his adversaries on every side. 
His lightnings light up the world; 
the earth sees and trembles. 
The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,
before the Lord of all the earth.
The heavens proclaim his righteousness;
and all the peoples behold his glory.
All worshipers of images are put to shame,
those who make their boast in worthless idols;
all gods bow down before him.
Zion hears and is glad,
and the towns of Judah rejoice,
because of your judgments, O God.
For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.
The Lord loves those who hate evil;
he guards the lives of his faithful;
he rescues them from the hand of the wicked.
Light dawns for the righteous,
and joy for the upright in heart.
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,
and give thanks to his holy name!

Psalm 97

Praise God for His Holiness
The Lord is king;
let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim;
let the earth quake!
The Lord is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
Let them praise your great and awesome name.
Holy is he! Mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established equity;
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
Extol the Lord our God;
worship at his footstool.
Holy is he! Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
Samuel also was among those who called on his name.
They cried to the Lord, and he answered them.
He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;
they kept his decrees, and the statutes that he gave them.
O Lord our God, you answered them;
you were a forgiving God to them,
but an avenger of their wrongdoings.
Extol the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain;
for the Lord our God is holy.

Psalm 99

All Lands Summoned to Praise God
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
Know that the Lord is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.
For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100

Praise for God's Wonderful Works
Praise the Lord!
I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.
Full of honour and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.
He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.
He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.
He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.
The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.
They are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his name.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever.

Psalm 111

God's Wonders at the Exodus
When Israel went out from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion.
The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.
The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.
Why is it, O sea, that you flee?
O Jordan, that you turn back?
O mountains, that you skip like rams?
O hills, like lambs?
Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
who turns the rock into a pool of water,
the flint into a spring of water.

Psalm 114

The Glories of God's Law
Happy are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the Lord.
Happy are those who keep his decrees,
who seek him with their whole heart,
who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.
You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.
O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!
Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.
I will praise you with an upright heart,
when I learn your righteous ordinances.
I will observe your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me.
How can young people keep their way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
With my whole heart I seek you;
do not let me stray from your commandments.
I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.
Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes.
With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.
I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.
I will meditate on your precepts,
and fix my eyes on your ways.
I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.
Deal bountifully with your servant,
so that I may live and observe your word.
Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
I live as an alien in the land;
do not hide your commandments from me.
My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances at all times.
You rebuke the insolent,
accursed ones, who wander from your commandments;
take away from me their scorn and contempt,
for I have kept your decrees.
Even though princes sit plotting against me,
your servant will meditate on your statutes.
Your decrees are my delight, they are my counsellors.
My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to your word.
When I told of my ways, you answered me;
teach me your statutes.
Make me understand the way of your precepts,
and I will meditate on your wondrous works.
My soul melts away for sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word.
Put false ways far from me;
and graciously teach me your law.
I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I set your ordinances before me.
I cling to your decrees, O Lord;
let me not be put to shame.
I run the way of your commandments,
for you enlarge my understanding.
Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes,
and I will observe it to the end.
Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.
Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.
Turn my heart to your decrees, and not to selfish gain.
Turn my eyes from looking at vanities;
give me life in your ways.
Confirm to your servant your promise,
which is for those who fear you.
Turn away the disgrace that I dread, for your ordinances are good.
See, I have longed for your precepts;
in your righteousness give me life.
Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord,
your salvation according to your promise.
Then I shall have an answer for those who taunt me,
for I trust in your word.
Do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
for my hope is in your ordinances.
I will keep your law continually, forever and ever,
I shall walk at liberty, for I have sought your precepts.
I will also speak of your decrees before kings,
and shall not be put to shame;
I find my delight in your commandments,
Because I love them.
I revere your commandments, which I love,
and I will meditate on your statutes.
Remember your word to your servant,
in which you have made me hope.
This is my comfort in my distress, that your promise gives me life.
The arrogant utterly deride me, but I do not turn away from your law.
When I think of your ordinances from of old,
I take comfort, O Lord.
Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked,
those who forsake your law.
Your statutes have been my songs wherever I make my home.
I remember your name in the night, O Lord, and keep your law.
This blessing has fallen to me, for I have kept your precepts.
The Lord is my portion;
I promise to keep your words.
I implore your favour with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.
When I think of your ways, I turn my feet to your decrees;
I hurry and do not delay to keep your commandments.
Though the cords of the wicked ensnare me,
I do not forget your law.
At midnight I rise to praise you,
because of your righteous ordinances.
I am a companion of all who fear you,
of those who keep your precepts.
The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love;
teach me your statutes.
You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word.
Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
for I believe in your commandments.
Before I was humbled I went astray, but now I keep your word.
You are good and do good;
teach me your statutes.
The arrogant smear me with lies,
but with my whole heart I keep your precepts.
Their hearts are fat and gross, but I delight in your law.
It is good for me that I was humbled,
so that I might learn your statutes.
The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.
Your hands have made and fashioned me;
give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.
Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice,
because I have hoped in your word.
I know, O Lord, that your judgments are right,
and that in faithfulness you have humbled me.
Let your steadfast love become my comfort
according to your promise to your servant.
Let your mercy come to me, that I may live;
for your law is my delight.
Let the arrogant be put to shame,
because they have subverted me with guile;
as for me, I will meditate on your precepts.
Let those who fear you turn to me, so that they may know your decrees.
May my heart be blameless in your statutes,
so that I may not be put to shame.
My soul languishes for your salvation;
I hope in your word.
My eyes fail with watching for your promise;
I ask, "When will you comfort me?"
For I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,
yet I have not forgotten your statutes.
How long must your servant endure?
When will you judge those who persecute me?
The arrogant have dug pitfalls for me; they flout your law.
All your commandments are enduring;
I am persecuted without cause; help me!
They have almost made an end of me on earth;
but I have not forsaken your precepts.
In your steadfast love spare my life,
so that I may keep the decrees of your mouth.
The Lord exists forever; your word is firmly fixed in heaven.
Your faithfulness endures to all generations;
you have established the earth, and it stands fast.
By your appointment they stand today,
for all things are your servants.
If your law had not been my delight,
I would have perished in my misery.
I will never forget your precepts,
for by them you have given me life.
I am yours; save me, for I have sought your precepts.
The wicked lie in wait to destroy me,
but I consider your decrees.
I have seen a limit to all perfection,
but your commandment is exceedingly broad.
Oh, how I love your law!
It is my meditation all day long.
Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies,
for it is always with me.
I have more understanding than all my teachers,
for your decrees are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged,
for I keep your precepts.
I hold back my feet from every evil way,
in order to keep your word.
I do not turn away from your ordinances,
for you have taught me.
How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through your precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to observe your righteous ordinances.
I am severely afflicted; give me life, O Lord, according to your word.
Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your ordinances.
I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law.
The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts.
Your decrees are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.
I hate the double-minded, but I love your law.
You are my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in your word.
Go away from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commandments of my God.
Uphold me according to your promise,
that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope.
Hold me up, that I may be safe and have regard for your statutes continually.
You spurn all who go astray from your statutes;
for their cunning is in vain.
All the wicked of the earth you count as dross;
therefore I love your decrees.
My flesh trembles for fear of you,
and I am afraid of your judgments.
I have done what is just and right;
do not leave me to my oppressors.
Guarantee your servant's well-being;
do not let the godless oppress me.
My eyes fail from watching for your salvation,
and for the fulfillment of your righteous promise.
Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love,
and teach me your statutes.
I am your servant; give me understanding,
so that I may know your decrees.
It is time for the Lord to act, for your law has been broken.
Truly I love your commandments more than gold,
more than fine gold.
Truly I direct my steps by all your precepts;
I hate every false way.
Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.
The unfolding of your words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple.
With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments.
Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is your custom toward those who love your name.
Keep my steps steady according to your promise,
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.
Redeem me from human oppression, that I may keep your precepts.
Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes.
My eyes shed streams of tears because your law is not kept.
You are righteous, O Lord, and your judgments are right.
You have appointed your decrees in righteousness and in all faithfulness.
My zeal consumes me because my foes forget your words.
Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it.
I am small and despised, yet I do not forget your precepts.
Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is the truth.
Trouble and anguish have come upon me,
but your commandments are my delight.
Your decrees are righteous forever;
give me understanding that I may live.
With my whole heart I cry:
answer me, O Lord. I will keep your statutes.
I cry to you; save me, that I may observe your decrees.
I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I put my hope in your words.
My eyes are awake before each watch of the night,
that I may meditate on your promise.
In your steadfast love hear my voice;
O Lord, in your justice preserve my life.
Those who persecute me with evil purpose draw near;
they are far from your law.
Yet you are near, O Lord, and all your commandments are true.
Long ago I learned from your decrees that you have established them forever.
Look on my misery and rescue me, for I do not forget your law.
Plead my cause and redeem me;
give me life according to your promise.
Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek your statutes.
Great is your mercy, O Lord;
give me life according to your justice.
Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,
yet I do not swerve from your decrees.
I look at the faithless with disgust, because they do not keep your commands.
Consider how I love your precepts;
preserve my life according to your steadfast love.
The sum of your word is truth;
and every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever.
Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of your words.
I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.
I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.
Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous ordinances.
Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.
I hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I fulfill your commandments.
My soul keeps your decrees;
I love them exceedingly.
I keep your precepts and decrees, for all my ways are before you.
Let my cry come before you, O Lord;
give me understanding according to your word.
Let my supplication come before you;
deliver me according to your promise.
My lips will pour forth praise, because you teach me your statutes.
My tongue will sing of your promise, for all your commandments are right.
Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.
I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight.
Let me live that I may praise you, and let your ordinances help me.
I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
seek out your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.

Psalm 119
God’s Work in Creation and in History
O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
O give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who spread out the earth on the waters,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who made the great lights,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
the sun to rule over the day,
or his steadfast love endures forever;
the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who struck Egypt through their firstborn,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
and brought Israel out from among them,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who divided the Red Sea in two,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
and made Israel pass through the midst of it,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who led his people through the wilderness,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who struck down great kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
and killed famous kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
and Og, king of Bashan,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
and gave their land as a heritage,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
a heritage to his servant Israel,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
It is he who remembered us in our low estate,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Psalm 136
The Greatness and the Goodness of God
I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.
One generation shall laud your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.
On the glorious splendour of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed,
and I will declare your greatness.
They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.
All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your faithful shall bless you.
They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,
and tell of your power, to make known to all people your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
The Lord is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds.
The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.
The Lord is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.
The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
He fulfills the desire of all who fear him;
he also hears their cry, and saves them.
The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,
and all flesh will bless his holy name forever and ever.

Psalm 145

Praise for God’s Universal Glory
Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!
Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.
He established them forever and ever;
his fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.
Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!
Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and women alike, old and young together!
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 148

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150

Then I saw the wicked buried; they used to go in and out of the holy place, and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity. Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the human heart is fully set to do evil. Though sinners do evil a hundred times and prolong their lives, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they stand in fear before him, but it will not be well with the wicked, neither will they prolong their days like a shadow, because they do not stand in fear before God. There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people who are treated according to the conduct of the wicked, and there are wicked people who are treated according to the conduct of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. So I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun. However much they may toil in seeking, they will not find it out; even though those who are wise claim to know, they cannot find it out.

Ecclesiastes 8: 10–17

God is Powerful and Merciful
For it is always in your power to show great strength, and who can withstand the might of your arm? Because the whole world before you is like a speck that tips the scales, and like a drop of morning dew that falls on the ground. But you are merciful to all, for you can do all things, and you overlook people’s sins, so that they may repent. For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made, for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living. For your immortal spirit is in all things.
Therefore you correct little by little those who trespass, and you remind and warn them of the things through which they sin, so that they may be freed from wickedness and put their trust in you, O Lord.

Wisdom of Solomon 11: 21–12:2

The Foolishness of Nature Worship
For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works; but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world. If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord, or the author of beauty created them. And if people were amazed at their power and working, let them perceive from them how much more powerful is the one who formed them. For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator. Yet these people are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray while seeking God and desiring to find him. For while they live among his works, they keep searching, and they trust in what they see, because the things that are seen are beautiful. Yet again, not even they are to be excused; for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?

Wisdom of Solomon 13: 1–9

The Praise of Wisdom
Wisdom praises herself, and tells of her glory in the midst of her people. In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist. I dwelt in the highest heavens, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud. Alone I compassed the vault of heaven and traversed the depths of the abyss. Over waves of the sea, over all the earth, and over every people and nation I have held sway. Among all these I sought a resting place; in whose territory should I abide? "Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent. He said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.' Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be. In the holy tent I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion. Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting place, and in Jerusalem was my domain. I took root in an honored people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage. "I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon, and like a cypress on the heights of Hermon. I grew tall like a palm tree in En-gedi, and like rosebushes in Jericho; like a fair olive tree in the field, and like a plane tree beside water I grew tall. Like cassia and camel's thorn I gave forth perfume, and like choice myrrh I spread my fragrance, like galbanum, onycha, and stacte, and like the odor of incense in the tent. Like a terebinth I spread out my branches, and my branches are glorious and graceful. Like the vine I bud forth delights, and my blossoms become glorious and abundant fruit. "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits. For the memory of me is sweeter than honey, and the possession of me sweeter than the honeycomb. Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more. Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame, and those who work with me will not sin."

Wisdom and the Law
All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law that Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob. It overflows, like the Pishon, with wisdom, and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits. It runs over, like the Euphrates, with understanding, and like the Jordan at harvest time. It pours forth instruction like the Nile, like the Gihon at the time of vintage. The first man did not know wisdom fully, nor will the last one fathom her. For her thoughts are more abundant than the sea, and her counsel deeper than the great abyss. As for me, I was like a canal from a river, like a water channel into a garden. I said, "I will water my garden and drench my flower-beds." And lo, my canal became a river, and my river a sea. I will again make instruction shine forth like the dawn, and I will make it clear from far away. I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, and leave it to all future generations. Observe that I have not labored for myself alone, but for all who seek wisdom.

Sirach 24: 1–34
Dreams Mean Nothing
The senseless have vain and false hopes, and dreams give wings to fools. As one who catches at a shadow and pursues the wind, so is anyone who believes in a dream. What is seen in dreams is but a reflection, the likeness of a face looking at itself. From an unclean thing what can be clean? And from something false what can be true? Divinations and omens and dreams are unreal, and like a woman in labour, the mind has fantasies. Unless they are sent by intervention from the Most High, pay no attention to them. For dreams have deceived many, and those who put their hope in them have perished. Without such deceptions the law will be fulfilled, and wisdom is complete in the mouth of the faithful.

Sirach 34: 1–8

Fear the Lord
The spirit of those who fear the Lord will live, for their hope is in him who saves them. Those who fear the Lord will not be timid, or play the coward, for he is their hope. Happy is the soul that fears the Lord! To whom does he look? And who is his support? The eyes of the Lord are on those who love him, a mighty shield and strong support, a shelter from scorching wind and a shade from noonday sun, a guard against stumbling and a help against falling. He lifts up the soul and makes the eyes sparkle; he gives health and life and blessing.

Sirach 34: 14–20

A Hymn of Praise to God
I have more on my mind to express; I am full like the full moon. Listen to me, my faithful children, and blossom like a rose growing by a stream of water. Send out fragrance like incense, and put forth blossoms like a lily. Scatter the fragrance, and sing a hymn of praise; bless the Lord for all his works. Ascribe majesty to his name and give thanks to him with praise, with songs on your lips, and with harps; this is what you shall say in thanksgiving: "All the works of the Lord are very good, and whatever he commands will be done at the appointed time. No one can say, 'What is this?' or 'Why is that?''-- for at the appointed time all such questions will be answered. At his word the waters stood in a heap, and the reservoirs of water at the word of his mouth. When he commands, his every purpose is fulfilled, and none can limit his saving power. The works of all are before him, and nothing can be hidden from his eyes. From the beginning to the end of time he can see everything, and nothing is too marvelous for him. No one can say, "What is this?" or "Why is that?"-- for everything has been created for its own purpose. "His blessing covers the dry land like a river, and drenches it like a flood. But his wrath drives out the nations, as when he turned a watered land into salt. To the faithful his ways are straight, but full of pitfalls for the wicked. From the beginning good things were created for the good, but for sinners good things and bad. The basic necessities of human life are water and fire and iron and salt and wheat flour and milk and honey, the blood of the grape and oil and clothing. All these are good for the godly, but for sinners they turn into evils. "There are winds created for vengeance, and in their anger they can dislodge mountains; on the day of reckoning they will pour out their strength and calm the anger of their Maker. Fire and hail and famine and pestilence, all these have been created for vengeance; the fangs of wild animals and scorpions and vipers, and the sword that punishes the ungodly with destruction. They take delight in doing his bidding, always ready for his service on earth; and when their time comes they never disobey his command." So from the beginning I have been convinced of all this and have thought it out and left it in writing: All the works of the Lord are good, and he will supply every need in its time. No one can say, "This is not as good as that," for everything proves good in its appointed time. So now sing praise with all your heart and voice, and bless the name of the Lord.

Sirach 39: 12–35

The Peaceful Kingdom
A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear
shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child
shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will
not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the
waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:1–9

A Vision for Jerusalem
The vision of all this has become for you like the words of a sealed document. If it is given to those who
can read, with the command, "Read this," they say, "We cannot, for it is sealed." And if it is given to those
who cannot read, saying, "Read this," they say, "We cannot read." The Lord said: Because these people
draw near with their mouths and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their
worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote; so I will again do amazing things with this
people, shocking and amazing. The wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the discernment of the
discerning shall be hidden. Ha! You who hide a plan too deep for the Lord, whose deeds are in the dark,
and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded
as the clay? Shall the thing made say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of the
one who formed it, "He has no understanding"? Shall not Lebanon in a very little while become a fruitful
field, and the fruitful field be regarded as a forest? On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a scroll,
and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. The meek shall obtain fresh joy in
the Lord, and the neediest people shall exult in the Holy One of Israel. For the tyrant shall be no more,
and the scoffer shall cease to be; all those alert to do evil shall be cut off-- those who cause a person to
lose a lawsuit, who set a trap for the arbiter in the gate, and without grounds deny justice to the one in the
right. Therefore thus says the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: No longer
shall Jacob be ashamed, no longer shall his face grow pale. For when he sees his children, the work of
my hands, in his midst, they will sanctify my name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand
in awe of the God of Israel. And those who err in spirit will come to understanding, and those who
grumble will accept instruction.

Isaiah 29:11–24

God’s People Are Comforted
Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has
served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her
sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a
highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven
ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I
said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass
withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The
grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it
up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and
his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a
shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother
sheep. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span,
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a
balance? Who has directed the spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed him? Whom did he
consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice? Who taught him knowledge, and
showed him the way of understanding? Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are
accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust. Lebanon would not provide fuel
enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt offering. All the nations are as nothing before him; they are
accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness
compare with him? An idol? A workman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold, and casts for it
silver chains. As a gift one chooses mulberry wood --wood that will not rot-- then seeks out a skilled
artisan to set up an image that will not topple. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not
been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he
who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the
heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? Says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God"? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Listen to me in silence, O coastlands; let the peoples renew their strength; let them approach, then let them speak; let us together draw near for judgment. Who has roused a victor from the east, summoned him to his service? He delivers up nations to him, and tramples kings under foot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow. He pursues them and passes on safely, scarcely touching the path with his feet. He has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, am first, and will be with the last. The coastlands have seen and are afraid, the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come. Each one helps the other, saying to one another, "Take courage!" The artisan encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths with the hammer encourages the one who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, "It is good"; and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be moved. But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"; do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. Yes, all who are incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Do not fear, I will help you." Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you insect Israel! I will help you, says the Lord; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. Now, I will make of you a threshing sledge, sharp, new, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them. Then you shall rejoice in the Lord; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.

The Servant, A Light to the Nations
Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who gave breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Isaiah 40: 1–41:20

Isaiah 42: 1–9
God Will Restore Israel
Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, “As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt,” but “As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them.” For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their ancestors. I am now sending for many fishermen, says the Lord, and they shall catch them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. For my eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from my presence, nor is their iniquity concealed from my sight. And I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations. O Lord, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble, to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say: Our ancestors have inherited nothing but lies, worthless things in which there is no profit. Can mortals make for themselves gods? Such are no gods! "Therefore I am surely going to teach them, this time I am going to teach them my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the Lord.”

Jeremiah 16: 14–21

Feeding of the Four Thousand
Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way." The disciples said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?" Jesus asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish." Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. Those who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children. After sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

Matthew 15: 32-39

The Man With the Unclean Spirit
He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath. They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, "Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm. They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, "What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!" And a report about him began to reach every place in the region.

Luke 4: 31-37

The Resurrection
Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried
him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20

The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." The next day John again was standing with two of
his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

John 1

Christ's Humility
If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2: 1–11

The Word of Life
We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us-- we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 John 1

The Heavenly Worship
After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in
white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and
rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the
seven spirits of God; and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal. Around
the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the
first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like
a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of
them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, “Holy,
holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.” And whenever the living creatures
give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the
twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever
and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive
glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

Revelation 4: 1–11