

project constant hope

the **Lord** keeps you **safe**
words of assurance
to calm your fears

project constant hope

You are my place of safety
and my shield.
Your word is my only hope.

Psalm 119.114 (CEV)

Project Constant Hope is an initiative being undertaken by the American Bible Society to bring the hope of God's Word to a nation traumatized by the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath.

The following Constant Hope Scripture-based booklets are available free of charge from the American Bible Society:

- **God Is Our Constant Hope** (leaflet), #111835 English; #111836 Spanish
- **God Is Our Shelter and Strength:** Words of Comfort from the Bible, #111838 English; #111837 Spanish
- **The LORD Is Near to the Brokenhearted:** Comfort and Hope from the Scriptures for You in Your Sorrow, #111676 English; #111718 Spanish
- **Hold On: Love Is on the Way:** Hope and Strength from the Bible for those experiencing depression and suicidal tendencies, #111765 English; #111766 Spanish
- **The LORD Keeps You Safe:** Words of Assurance to Calm Your Fears, #111768 English; #111767 Spanish
- **You Don't Have to Be Afraid:** Helping Children Cope with Fear, #111714 English; #111715 Spanish
- **How Can I Pray When I'm Angry?** What the Bible Says about Expressing Anger, #111764 English; #111763 Spanish
- **Prayers for Peace:** Hope and Strength from the Bible, #111762 English; #111761 Spanish

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RESPOND TO GOD

It is the hope and prayer of the American Bible Society that you have found this Scripture booklet to be a source of encouragement and strength. May God's Word be your source of constant hope. Our prayer for you is expressed in the words of the apostle Paul, a first-century Christian:

The Scriptures were written to teach and encourage us by giving us hope. God is the one who makes us patient and cheerful. I pray that he will help you live at peace with each other, as you follow Christ. Then all of you together will praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15.4-6

We invite you to pray:

Loving God, you are my constant hope. Thank you for speaking to me through the words of Holy Scripture and for hearing my prayers. Guide me each day, and help me to follow you. Amen.

FIND A CHURCH

It is often during difficult times in life that people feel most strongly the need to be among people who share their beliefs and values. While God speaks to each and every one of us individually in real ways, God also desires us to be in regular fellowship with other Christians. If you have never belonged to a church, or if it has been a long time since you last attended church regularly, now is the perfect time to find a church home. The task may seem daunting, but trust God to lead you to a church where . . .

- The Good News of God's unconditional love through Christ is proclaimed
- The Bible is read during worship and studied regularly by members
- The congregation and leadership are warm and welcoming
- The pastor, priest, or minister gladly answers any questions you may have about the church and its beliefs.

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CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY
NEW YORK

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This is a Portion of Holy Scripture in the *Contemporary English Version*. The American Bible Society is a non-for-profit organization which publishes the Scriptures without doctrinal note or comment. Since 1816, its single mission is to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford. Working toward this goal the ABS is a member of the United Bible Societies, a world-wide effort that extends to more than 200 countries and territories. You are urged to read the Bible and to share it with others. For other free Scripture publications, call the American Bible Society at 1-800-32-BIBLE, or write to 1865 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023-7505. If you decide to find a home church, www.forministry.com will help you with easy-to-use tools to search for local ministry. Visit the ABS website! www.americanbible.org.

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INTRODUCTION

I am so afraid!

I can't sleep – I am haunted by recurring nightmares!

I don't want to be left alone!

An act of violence or terrorism is often followed by a period of fear. Experiences such as the sudden and unexpected death of a loved one or the loss of personal property, and even the witnessing of traumatic events, can bring on feelings of fear, anxiety, helplessness, or abandonment. If you are experiencing any of these feelings, you may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Symptoms include recurring nightmares, panic attacks, difficulty in concentrating, nervousness at sudden noises, difficulty in establishing emotional relationships, and hypervigilance (a heightened sense of alertness).

You are encouraged to discuss what you are feeling with a member of the clergy or a trained counselor. Your fears are very real and you need not suffer in solitude and silence.

In the midst of your fears, know that God is with you—comforting and strengthening you, and assuring you with words that are repeated frequently throughout the Bible: "Don't be afraid."

This Scripture booklet contains passages from the Bible – words of comfort and assurance – from which you can draw strength. God will care for you and promises never to let go or abandon you. Cling to this promise.

I am the **Lord** your God.
I am holding your hand,
so don't be afraid.
I am here to help you.

Isaiah 41.13

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C O N T E N T S

Introduction	3-4
1. Tell God Your Fears	6-12
2. God Hears Your Cries	13-20
3. God Will Take Care of You	21-24
4. Be Assured of God's Great Love for You . . .	25-30
5. Walk with God Each Day	31-34

1 TELL GOD YOUR FEARS

Fear, anxiety, a sense of rejection, despair, loss of hope, and a sense of helplessness were among the feelings experienced by many of the psalm writers. Like them, share your feelings with God.

I am afraid.

God Most High, have pity on me!
Have mercy. I run to you
for safety.
In the shadow of your wings,
I seek protection
till danger dies down.
I pray to you, my protector.
You will send help from heaven
and save me,
but you will bring trouble
on my attackers.
You are faithful,
and you can be trusted.

I live among lions,
who gobble down people!
They have spears and arrows
instead of teeth,
and they have sharp swords
instead of tongues.

May you, my God, be honored
above the heavens;
may your glory be seen
everywhere on earth.

Psalm 57.1-5

Save me, God! Protect me
from enemy attacks!
Keep me safe from brutal people
who want to kill me.

Merciless enemies, Lord,
are hiding and plotting,
hoping to kill me.
I have not hurt them
in any way at all.
But they are ready to attack.
Do something! Help me!
Look at what's happening.

Psalm 59.1-4

I feel rejected.

How much longer, Lord,
will you forget about me?
Will it be forever?
How long will you hide?
How long must I be confused
and miserable all day?
How long will my enemies
keep beating me down?

Please listen, Lord God,
and answer my prayers.
Make my eyes sparkle again,
or else I will fall
into the sleep of death.
My enemies will say,
“Now we’ve won!”
They will be greatly pleased
when I am defeated.

Psalm 13.1-4

I am discouraged.

As a deer gets thirsty
for streams of water,
I truly am thirsty
for you, my God.
In my heart, I am thirsty
for you, the living God.
When will I see your face?
Day and night my tears
are my only food,
as everyone keeps asking,
“Where is your God?”

You are my mighty rock.
Why have you forgotten me?
Why must enemies mistreat me
and make me sad?
Even my bones are in pain,
while all day long
my enemies sneer and ask,
“Where is your God?”

Why am I discouraged?
Why am I restless?
I trust you!
And I will praise you again
because you help me,
and you are my God.

Psalm 42.1-3, 9-11

I feel hopeless.

Please hurry, Lord
and answer my prayer.

I feel hopeless.
Don't turn away
and leave me here to die.
Each morning let me learn
more about your love
because I trust you.
I come to you in prayer,
asking for your guidance.

Please rescue me
from my enemies, Lord,
I come to you for safety.
You are my God. Show me
what you want me to do,
and let your gentle Spirit
lead me in the right path.
Psalm 143.7-10

I am weak and unable to eat.

I am poor and helpless,
and I have lost all hope.
I am fading away
like an evening shadow;
I am tossed aside
like a crawling insect.
I have gone without eating,
until my knees are weak,
and my body is bony.
When my enemies see me,
they say cruel things
and shake their heads.
Psalm 109.22-25

I am in deep distress.

Don't punish me, Lord,
or even correct me
 when you are angry!
Have pity on me and heal
 my feeble body.
My bones tremble with fear,
and I am in deep distress.
 How long will it be?

Turn and come to my rescue.
Show your wonderful love
 and save me, Lord.
If I die, I cannot praise you
 or even remember you.
My groaning has worn me out.
At night my bed and pillow
 are soaked with tears.
Sorrow has made my eyes dim,
and my sight has failed
 because of my enemies.

Psalm 6.1-7

I am unable to sleep in peace.

I pray to you, Lord God,
 and I beg you to listen.
In days filled with trouble,
 I search for you.
And at night I tirelessly
lift my hands in prayer,
 refusing comfort.
When I think of you,
 I feel restless and weak.

Because of you, Lord God,
I can't sleep.
I am restless
and can't even talk.
I think of times gone by,
of those years long ago.
Each night my mind
is flooded with questions:
"Have you rejected me forever?
Won't you be kind again?
Is this the end of your love
and your promises?
Have you forgotten
how to have pity?
Do you refuse to show mercy
because of your anger?"

Psalm 77.1-9

I am worried and troubled.

I am lonely and troubled.
Show that you care
and have pity on me.
My awful worries keep growing.
Rescue me from sadness.
See my troubles and misery
and forgive my sins.

Look at all my enemies!
See how much they hate me.
I come to you for shelter.
Protect me, keep me safe,
and don't disappoint me.
I obey you with all my heart,

and I trust you, knowing
that you will save me.

Psalm 25.16-21

I feel helpless.

Please listen, Lord
and answer my prayer!
I am poor and helpless.
Protect me and save me
because you are my God.
I am your faithful servant,
and I trust you.

Be kind to me!
I pray to you all day.
Make my heart glad!
I serve you,
and my prayer is sincere.
You willingly forgive,
and your love is always there
for those who pray to you.

Please listen, Lord!
Answer my prayer for help.
When I am in trouble, I pray,
knowing you will listen.

Psalm 86.1-7

2 GOD HEARS YOUR CRIES

*In the midst of your fears, be assured that God
cares for you and will shelter you.*

The LORD will keep you safe.

You, Lord, are the light
that keeps me safe.
I am not afraid of anyone.
You protect me,
and I have no fears.
Brutal people may attack
and try to kill me,
but they will stumble.
Fierce enemies may attack,
but they will fall.
Armies may surround me,
but I won't be afraid;
war may break out,
but I will trust you.

I ask only one thing, Lord:
Let me live in your house
every day of my life
to see how wonderful you are
and to pray in your temple.

In times of trouble,
you will protect me.
You will hide me in your tent
and keep me safe
on top of a mighty rock.
You will let me defeat

all of my enemies.
Then I will celebrate,
as I enter your tent
with animal sacrifices
and songs of praise.

Please listen when I pray!
Have pity. Answer my prayer.
My heart tells me to pray.
I am eager to see your face,
so don't hide from me.
I am your servant,
and you have helped me.
Don't turn from me in anger.
You alone keep me safe.
Don't reject or desert me.
Even if my father and mother
should desert me,
you will take care of me.

Teach me to follow, Lord,
and lead me on the right path
because of my enemies.
Don't let them do to me
what they want.
People tell lies about me
and make terrible threats,
but I know I will live
to see how kind you are.

Trust the Lord!
Be brave and strong
and trust the Lord.

Psalm 27

The LORD will keep you secure.

Live under the protection
of God Most High
and stay in the shadow
of God All-Powerful.
Then you will say to the LORD,
“You are my fortress,
my place of safety;
you are my God,
and I trust you.”

The Lord will keep you safe
from secret traps
and deadly diseases.
He will spread his wings
over you
and keep you secure.
His faithfulness is like
a shield or a city wall.

You won't need to worry
about dangers at night
or arrows during the day.
And you won't fear diseases
that strike in the dark
or sudden disaster at noon.

You will not be harmed,
though thousands fall
all around you.
And with your own eyes
you will see the punishment
of the wicked.
The LORD Most High
is your fortress.

Run to him for safety,
and no terrible disasters
will strike you
or your home.

God will command his angels
to protect you
wherever you go.
They will carry you
in their arms,
and you won't hurt your feet
on the stones.
You will overpower
the strongest lions
and the most deadly snakes.

The Lord says, "If you love me
and truly know who I am,
I will rescue you
and keep you safe.
When you are in trouble,
call out to me.
I will answer and be there
to protect and honor you.
You will live a long life
and see my saving power."

Psalm 91

The LORD will protect you.

I look to the hills!
Where will I find help?
It will come from the LORD,
who created the heavens
and the earth.

The Lord is your protector,
and he won't go to sleep
or let you stumble.
The protector of Israel
doesn't doze
or ever get drowsy.

The Lord is your protector,
there at your right side
to shade you from the sun.
You won't be harmed
by the sun during the day
or by the moon at night.

The Lord will protect you
and keep you safe
from all dangers.
The Lord will protect you
now and always
wherever you go.

Psalm 121

The LORD will save you.

Our Lord, you keep your word
and do everything you say.
When someone stumbles or falls,
you give a helping hand.
Everyone depends on you,
and when the time is right,
you provide them with food.
By your own hand you satisfy
the desires of all who live.

Our Lord, everything you do
is kind and thoughtful,

and you are near to everyone
whose prayers are sincere.
You satisfy the desires
of all your worshipers,
and you come to save them
when they ask for help.
You take care of everyone
who loves you,
but you destroy the wicked.

I will praise you, Lord,
and everyone will respect
your holy name forever.

Psalm 145.13b-21

The LORD will renew your strength.

Don't you know?
Haven't you heard?
The Lord is the eternal God,
Creator of the earth.
He never gets weary or tired;
his wisdom cannot be measured.

The Lord gives strength
to those who are weary.
Even young people get tired,
then stumble and fall.
But those who trust the Lord
will find new strength.
They will be strong like eagles
soaring upward on wings;
they will walk and run
without getting tired.

Isaiah 40.28-31

The LORD will help you.

Don't be afraid. I am with you.
Don't tremble with fear.

I am your God.
I will make you strong,
as I protect you with my arm
and give you victories.

I am the LORD your God.
I am holding your hand,
so don't be afraid.
I am here to help you.

Isaiah 41.10, 13

The LORD will encourage you.

I am the LORD, the one
who encourages you.
Why are you afraid
of mere humans?
They dry up and die like grass.

I spread out the heavens
and laid foundations
for the earth.
But you have forgotten me,
your LORD and Creator.
All day long you were afraid
of those who were angry
and hoped to abuse you.
Where are they now?

Everyone crying out in pain
will be quickly set free;
they will be rescued

from the power of death
and never go hungry.
I will help them
because I am your God,
the **Lord All-Powerful**,
who makes the ocean roar.

I have told you what to say,
and I will keep you safe
in the palm of my hand.

Isaiah 51.12-16a

3 GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU

In the midst of your worries, God understands your needs and will calm your fears. You are precious to God.

Jesus said,
Five sparrows are sold for just two pennies, but God doesn't forget a one of them. Even the hairs on your head are counted. So don't be afraid! You are worth much more than many sparrows.

Luke 12.6,7

Jesus assured his disciples with these words:

I tell you not to worry about your life! Don't worry about having something to eat or wear. Life is more than food or clothing. Look at the crows! They don't plant or harvest, and they don't have storehouses or barns. But God takes care of them. You are much more important than any birds. Can worry make you live longer? If you don't have power over small things, why worry about everything else?

Look how the wild flowers grow! They don't work hard to make their clothes. But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of these flowers. God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. Won't he do even more for you? You have such little faith!

Don't keep worrying about having something to eat or drink. Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father knows what you need. But put God's work first, and these things will be yours as well.

Luke 12.22-31

When a sudden storm occurred, Jesus was able to calm the wind and the waves and offer reassurance to his disciples.

After Jesus left in a boat with his disciples, a terrible storm suddenly struck the lake, and waves started splashing into their boat.

Jesus was sound asleep, so the disciples went over to him and woke him up. They said, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

But Jesus replied, "Why are you so afraid? You surely don't have much faith." Then he got up and ordered the wind and the waves to calm down. And everything was calm.

The men in the boat were amazed and said, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him."

Matthew 8.23-27

Be assured of the LORD's protection.

The Lord protects everyone
who follows him,
but the wicked follow a road
that leads to ruin.

Psalms 1.6

In the sixth century B.C., the prophet Jeremiah announced God's words of hope to the people of Judah who were living in exile in Babylonia:

I will bless you with a future filled with hope — a future of success, not of suffering. You will turn back to me and ask for help, and I will answer your prayers. You will worship me with all your heart, and I will be with you and accept your worship.

Jeremiah 29.11-13

A prophet, writing at the time of Jerusalem's destruction in 586 B.C., was able to express these words of trust in the LORD:

From the bottom of the pit,
I prayed to you, Lord.
I begged you to listen.
"Help!" I shouted. "Save me!"
You answered my prayer
and came when I was in need.
You told me, "Don't worry!"
You rescued me
and saved my life.

Lamentations 3.55-58

Put your trust in God who is your place of safety.

Only God can save me,
and I calmly wait for him.
God alone is the mighty rock
that keeps me safe
and the fortress
where I am secure.

Only God gives inward peace,
and I depend on him.
God alone is the mighty rock
that keeps me safe,
and he is the fortress
where I feel secure.
God saves me and honors me.
He is that mighty rock
where I find safety.

Trust God, my friends,
and always tell him
each one of your concerns.
God is our place of safety.
Psalm 62.1,2, 5-8

4 BE ASSURED OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE FOR YOU

Surrender all your fears to God who will surround you with love and be at your side as you seek to work through the stress that follows your traumatic experience.

The LORD's love will shelter you.

Your love is a treasure,
and everyone finds shelter
in the shadow of your wings.
You give your guests a feast
in your house,
and you serve a tasty drink
that flows like a river.
The life-giving fountain
belongs to you,
and your light gives light
to each of us.

Our Lord, keep showing love
to everyone who knows you,
and use your power to save all
whose thoughts please you.

Psalm 36.7-10

The LORD's love is with you always.

You, Lord, are my shepherd.
I will never be in need.
You let me rest in fields
of green grass.

You lead me to streams
of peaceful water,
and you refresh my life.

You are true to your name,
and you lead me
along the right paths.
I may walk through valleys
as dark as death,
but I won't be afraid.
You are with me,
and your shepherd's rod
makes me feel safe.

You treat me to a feast,
while my enemies watch.
You honor me as your guest,
and you fill my cup
until it overflows.
Your kindness and love
will always be with me
each day of my life,
and I will live forever
in your house, Lord

Psalm 23

*Jesus, the Good Shepherd, will never allow you
to be lost.*

Jesus said:

I tell you for certain that only thieves and robbers
climb over the fence instead of going in through the
gate to the sheep pen. But the gatekeeper opens the
gate for the shepherd, and he goes in through it. The
sheep know their shepherd's voice. He calls each of
them by name and leads them out.

When he has led out all of his sheep, he walks in front of them, and they follow, because they know his voice. The sheep will not follow strangers. They don't recognize a stranger's voice, and they run away.

I tell you for certain that I am the gate for the sheep. Everyone who came before me was a thief or a robber, and the sheep did not listen to any of them. I am the gate. All who come in through me will be saved. Through me they will come and go and find pasture.

I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father, and I give up my life for my sheep. I have other sheep that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them together too, when they hear my voice. Then there will be one flock of sheep and one shepherd.

John 10.1-5, 7-9, 14-16

Claim the victory that is yours because of Christ's love for you.

In everything we have won more than a victory because of Christ who loves us. I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love — not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Romans 8.37-39

Claim the blessings God has in store for you.

Jesus said:
God blesses those people

who depend only on him.
They belong to the kingdom
of heaven!
God blesses those people
who grieve.
They will find comfort!
God blesses those people
who are humble.
The earth will belong
to them!
God blesses those people
who want to obey him
more than to eat or drink.
They will be given
what they want!
God blesses those people
who are merciful.
They will be treated
with mercy!
God blesses those people
whose hearts are pure.
They will see him!
God blesses those people
who make peace.
They will be called
his children!
God blesses those people
who are treated badly
for doing right.
They belong to the kingdom
of heaven.

Matthew 5.3-10

Celebrate God's love for you.

With all my heart
I praise the Lord,
and with all that I am
I praise his holy name!
With all my heart
I praise the Lord!
I will never forget
how kind he has been.

The Lord forgives our sins,
heals us when we are sick,
and protects us from death.
His kindness and love
are a crown on our heads.
Each day that we live,
he provides for our needs
and gives us the strength
of a young eagle.

The Lord is merciful!
He is kind and patient,
and his love never fails.

Psalm 103.1-5, 8

Remember, God's love never fails!

Praise the Lord! He is good.
God's love never fails.
Praise the God of all gods.
God's love never fails.
Praise the Lord of lords.
God's love never fails.

Only God works great miracles.

God's love never fails.

With wisdom he made the sky.

God's love never fails.

The Lord stretched the earth
over the ocean.

God's love never fails.

He made the bright lights
in the sky.

God's love never fails.

He lets the sun rule each day.

God's love never fails.

He lets the moon and the stars
rule each night.

God's love never fails.

God saw the trouble we were in.

God's love never fails.

He rescued us from our enemies.

God's love never fails.

He gives food to all who live.

God's love never fails.

Praise God in heaven!

God's love never fails.

Psalm 136.1-9, 23-26

5 WALK WITH GOD EACH DAY

*Give thanks to God who will continue to shower you with mercy,
kindness, and love.*

I love you, Lord!
You answered my prayers.
You paid attention to me,
and so I will pray to you
as long as I live.
Death attacked from all sides,
and I was captured
by its painful chains.
But when I was really hurting,
I prayed and said, "Lord,
please don't let me die!"

You are kind, Lord,
so good and merciful.
You protect ordinary people,
and when I was helpless,
you saved me
and treated me so kindly
that I don't need
to worry anymore.

You, Lord, have saved
my life from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling.
Now I will walk at your side
in this land of the living.
I was faithful to you

when I was suffering,
though in my confusion I said,
“I can’t trust anyone!”

What must I give you, Lord,
for being so good to me?
I will pour out an offering
of wine to you,
and I will pray in your name
because you
have saved me.
I will keep my promise to you
when your people meet.
You are deeply concerned
when one of your loyal people
faces death.

I worship you, Lord,
just as my mother did,
and you have rescued me
from the chains of death.
I will offer you a sacrifice
to show how grateful I am,
and I will pray.
I will keep my promise to you
when your people
gather at your temple
in Jerusalem.

Shout praises to the Lord!

Psalm 116

Know that God will be your guide every day.

You, Lord, are all I want!
You are my choice,
and you keep me safe.

You make my life pleasant,
and my future is bright.

I praise you, LORD,
for being my guide.
Even in the darkest night,
your teachings fill my mind.
I will always look to you,
as you stand beside me
and protect me from fear.
With all my heart,
I will celebrate,
and I can safely rest.

Psalm 16.5-9

Stay close to God who will never leave your side.

I think about you
before I go to sleep,
and my thoughts turn to you
during the night.
You have helped me,
and I sing happy songs
in the shadow of your wings.
I stay close to you,
and your powerful arm
supports me.



Psalm 63.6-8

***Continue to make your needs known to God
who will bless you with peace.***

Don't worry about anything, but pray about
everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers
and requests to God. Then, because you belong to

Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

Philippians 4.6,7

 *Claim God's Blessing* 

Write the following verse on an index card and carry it with you as a reminder of God's great love for you. Draw strength from this special promise.

*I trust you to save me,
LORD God,
and I won't be afraid.
My power and my strength
come from you,
and you have saved me."*

Isaiah 12.2

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Psalm

1.6 22
6.1-7 10
13.1-4 7
16.5-9 32-33
23 25-26
25.16-21 11
27 13-14
36.7-10 25
42.1-3, 9-11 8
57.1-5 6
59.1-4 7
62.1,2, 5-8 23-24
63.6-8 33
77.1-9 10-11
86.1-7 12
91 15-16
103.1-5, 8 28-29
109.22-25 9
116 31-32
121 16-17
136.1-9, 23-26 29-30
143.7-10 8-9
145.13b-21 17-18

Isaiah

12.2 34
40.28-31 18

41.13 4
41.10-3 19
51.12-16a 19-20

Jeremiah

29.11-13 22

Lamentations

3.55-58 23

Matthew

5.3-10 27-28
8.23-27 22

Luke

12.6,7 21
12.22-31 21

John

10.1-5, 7-9, 14-16 . . . 26-27

Romans

8.37-39 27

Philippians

4.6,7 33-34



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